

# **ELEMENTARY ORCHESTRA PARENT & STUDENT HANDBOOK 2019-2020**

**ORCHESTRA MATERIALS  
CLASSROOM EXPECTATIONS  
CURRICULAR GOALS  
AT HOME PRACTICE  
ASSESSMENT & REPORT CARDS  
ORCHESTRA DAYS/TIMES  
PERFORMANCES  
INSTRUMENT CARE**

## Orchestra Materials Needed

- Instrument with horse hair bow
- Violin/viola shoulder rest (this is very important for accurate posture) \*\*
- Rock stop/end pin stopper (cello & bass)
- Wire music stand for at home practice
- Cleaning cloth
- Instrument case
- Name tag on case (please write the student's name on book and binder as well!)
- Essential Elements Book 1
- 1 inch 3-ring binder (Mr. DeLisle will be providing supplemental music, so please make the binder "orchestra only").
- Pencil
- Positive attitude ☺

\*\* Mr. DeLisle suggests that violin and violists get an "Everest" shoulder rest. Your instrument should have a shoulder sponge that is included in your rental, but purchasing this separate shoulder rest will be a huge aid in your child's comfort and technical abilities.

## Classroom expectations

1. Unpack and line up to get tuned quickly and quietly.
2. Come prepared with all necessary materials for class every day.
3. Treat your classmates, teacher, and self with respect.
4. Stay on task and do your best to follow instructions as they are given.
5. Keep track of homework/practice assignments and turn them in on time.
6. Respect the use of school property and classroom/performance facilities.
7. No gum, food, or drinks are allowed in orchestra class.
8. Do the best you can as often as you can!

**Students are expected to come to class with all of their materials 100% of the time.**

**Students should NOT leave their instruments at school on days they do not have orchestra.**

They should bring their instrument to school and take it home with them on the same day that they have class. If the instrument is left at school, students will not have the opportunity to practice skills/technique/music at home.

- If a student comes to class without their instrument, Mr. DeLisle still expects them to participate in classroom activity and instruction. If this becomes persistent, parents will be notified and report card grades will be reflected negatively.

## Curricular Goals

### Bowing Skills

- Basic proficient bow hold
- Basic detache stroke: bow parallel to bridge and acceptable tone production
- Basic string crossings
- Accurate bowing of basic rhythmic note and rest values

### Instrument Position & Left-Hand Skills:

- Acceptable body posture
- Acceptable left hand shape
- Acceptable instrument position
- Demonstrate appropriate finger patterns for D/G scales

### Music Reading:

- Name notes in major keys D and G
- Accurately sight-read musical examples in the major keys of D and G, incorporating various rhythmic note and rest values

### Aural Skills:

- Imitate raising & lowering a pitch by ear
- Imitate basic melodic patterns by ear
- Imitate basic rhythms by ear
- Create basic rhythmic/melodic patterns

This is just the beginning of your child's journey in string playing! As their skills develop and become habits, they will be able to learn new skills, which will enable them to play more advanced music. In the beginning however, time is taken to slowly introduce one skill at a time. It is important to develop the skills of the left and right hands separately first, then bring them together later. The right and left hand have very different jobs. The right hand bows while the left hand fingers the notes on the instrument. **These hand assignments remain the same regardless of hand dominance/preference.** It takes a high level of coordination in order to accomplish both tasks simultaneously.



## At Home Practicing

Practicing at home is just as important as coming to class with all of their materials. Progress can only be achieved when students practice the skills at home that they are learning.

**“You only need to practice on the days you eat!”**

The process of learning an instrument involves training the body and the mind together. In order to reinforce skills and turn them into habits, the skills must be practiced consistently. When students practice the materials that they are learning, class is able to keep a forward momentum. If students do not practice, progress is significantly stifled. In the early stages of musical doing and thinking, motivation is directly related to success. It is a basic psychological understanding that when students feel successful, their motivation increases. Conversely, when they do not feel successful, their motivation decreases.

**The best and easiest way for students to feel successful and motivated is to get them practicing on a regular basis.**



### Practice Cards

After the first few weeks of school, students will be introduced to the use of a practice card. The purpose of practice cards is to help students develop healthy and productive practice habits. Students should write each task that they accomplish on the day that they practice. Parents are responsible for monitoring their student's practice time and signing the practice card. It is then the responsibility of the student to turn in the practice card at the beginning of class on the first day of class each week. They will receive a new practice card on the same day, and the process is repeated. Record is kept of whether or not students turn in assigned practice cards and this is reflected on their report cards.

## Assessment and Report Cards

### **Informal Assessment**

In music class, assessment is ongoing. Students are “performing” each time they play their instrument, demonstrating the skills that they are learning on a constant basis. Students are monitored throughout each class period. Their posture and technique are observed, and corrections and suggestions for improvement are given as needed.

### **Formal Assessment**

Formal assessment is administered in two forms: written assignments and playing quizzes.

Written Materials – A portion of class time will be devoted to ear-training, basic music theory, note reading, and composition. Students should fully complete and turn in required forms, worksheets, written assignments, and quizzes on time.

Playing Quizzes – Perform excerpts and assigned materials, perform to the best of their ability, and demonstrate improvement or mastery of a skill. Because orchestra is a performance-based class, students will be asked to prepare for playing quizzes frequently throughout the year. Quizzes are simply an opportunity for students to demonstrate their progress and diligent at-home practice. All materials on the exam will be covered in class and students will usually be notified well in advance of a quiz. Orchestra is a cooperative learning environment therefore; students perform in front of each other during class time. This is so that students learn how to be respectful and encouraging of each other’s progress.

## Orchestra Days/ Times

Greenfield	A&C days	9:00-9:45am
Beverly	A&C days	10:50-11:35am
Bingham Farms	A&C days	1:00-1:45pm
West Maple	A&C days	2:45-3:30pm

Quarton	B&D days	9:05-9:50am
Pembroke	B&D days	10:35-11:20am
Harlan	B&D days	1:10-1:55pm
Pierce	B&D days	2:55-3:40pm

## Orchestra Spring Concert Information

In the spring, the 5<sup>th</sup> grade orchestra students will have a concert demonstrating the skills they have learned on their instruments. There will be two separate concerts- please look below to find what concert your student will be a part of:

### **Derby Feeders** (*Harlan, Pembroke, Pierce, Quarton*)

#### **Mandatory after-school Rehearsal:**

Wednesday, May 13<sup>th</sup>, 2019 from 4:30-5:30pm

#### **Spring Concert:**

Thursday, May 14<sup>th</sup>, 2019 @ 7pm  
Student report time 6:20pm

\*Both events will be located at Seaholm Auditorium\*

### **Berkshire Feeders** (*Beverly, Bingham Farms, Greenfield, West Maple*)

#### **Mandatory after-school Rehearsal:**

Monday, May 11<sup>th</sup>, 2019 from 4:30-5:30pm

#### **Spring Concert:**

Tuesday, May 12<sup>th</sup>, 2019 @ 7pm  
Student report time 6:20pm

\*Both events will be located at Groves Auditorium\*

Each elementary school will perform a combined band and orchestra concert assembly at their school building for students and staff. These dates are still to be determined.

## CARE & MAINTENANCE OF STRING INSTRUMENTS AND BOWS\*

Instruct students to carefully follow these guidelines for caring and maintaining their instruments and bows:

1. Only the player should be allowed to touch the instrument and bow. String instruments and bows are very fragile. Well-meaning parents and curious siblings can easily damage an instrument or a bow without intending to do so.
2. Keep the instrument and bow in the case when not in use, with the case latched or completely zipped.
3. Keep the instrument and bow out of direct sunlight.
4. Keep the instrument and bow in moderate temperatures only. String instruments and bows warp and crack in extreme temperatures and high humidity. *(Do not keep it in a room that is not heated, and do not keep near direct sources of heat or cold)*
5. Clean the instrument and bow after every use. Use a cotton cloth to wipe perspiration and rosin off the instrument *(particularly the strings)* and bow stick. Students should keep a cloth for cleaning in the instrument case. *(Cloth should be soft, lint-free, and non-abrasive)*
6. Have all cracks repaired and open seams glued immediately.
7. Every time after playing, loosen the bow hair. Loosen until just before individual bow hairs begin to touch the stick.
8. Never touch the bow hair. Do not attempt to clean it.
9. Hold the instrument only by the neck. Touching the body of the instrument will eventually damage the varnish.
10. Store music away from the violin or viola case unless there is a specific zippered compartment designed to hold music.
11. Rubbing alcohol may be applied to a soft cloth or cotton ball and used to clean the strings, fingerboard, and chin rest. The alcohol must not touch any varnish on the instrument, as it will damage it. *(This should only be done periodically.)*
12. Periodically clean the instrument and bow stick with professional string instrument cleaner applied to facial tissue. Only cleaner manufactured for cleaning string instruments should be used, not wood furniture cleaners. *(The rental companies clean the instrument before you receive it. Please do not do this yourself. Allow the rental company to do this for you as it only needs to be done approximately once a year.)*
13. Replace strings when they break, fray, or become false.
14. Replace the bow hair annually.

\*Hamann, Donald L., and Robert Gillespie. 2004. *Strategies for Teaching Strings*. New York: Oxford University Press.



## **About the Instructor**

Mr. Bobby DeLisle graduated from Wayne State University with a B.M. in Music Education and a M.M. in Music Composition in 2014. Outside of the conventional classroom environment Mr. DeLisle has enjoyed teaching for String Project @ Wayne State, Michigan Virtual, and the Detroit Institute of Music Education. When he's not teaching he enjoys spending time with his wife Haley and their daughter Virginia. Mr. DeLisle is excited to see what this school year brings.

### **Contact Info:**

Mr. DeLisle works at all eight elementary buildings in BPS, and because he does not have a permanent classroom, the best way to reach him is by his e-mail address below.

[rdelisle@birmingham.k12.mi.us](mailto:rdelisle@birmingham.k12.mi.us)

### **Attention:**

After carefully reading the Elementary Orchestra Handbook please complete the Parent-Student Acknowledgement Form found on Mr. DeLisle's beginning orchestra website. This task must be completed by the second week of school.

[www.bpsbeginningstrings.weebly.com](http://www.bpsbeginningstrings.weebly.com)