



Dear Orchestra Students and Parents,

Welcome to 2016-2017 Beginning Orchestra! It has been great getting to know each student as they try out the instruments that they will play. I am really looking forward to starting lessons on the new instruments! Within the next two weeks, students will receive a lesson schedule that will have the day, time, and location of each lesson.

*Please take the time to read through this handbook. It contains helpful and important information about the orchestra program.*

Concert dates will be posted soon. We will be having one or two evening concerts towards the end of the school year. There is also an optional solo and ensemble contest that will be taking place on April 8th.

I will occasionally be sending email updates with information about what we are learning, important dates, or anything else I would like you to know about. If you have not provided an e-mail address, I will send a paper newsletter home with students that contains important information. I am also in the process of updating a Haiku Page which I will refer to throughout the year. The link to this page will be shared with students and parents around the middle of the first quarter.

Here is a little bit of information about myself:

I graduated from the University of Iowa with a Bachelor of Music Degree in String Performance. I have been playing the viola for 16 years. I have performed in many different orchestras, chamber groups, and played my viola in a folk band while in college. Orchestra has been an extremely positive part of my life for the past 16 years. I am passionate about sharing my love of music with children. This is my third year in District 300, and I am so excited to start another year!

Thank you all for giving your children the opportunity to play in the orchestra. I am so excited to get started! If you ever have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to ask. Email is the fastest way to get ahold of me since I am teaching at five schools, but I do also check my voicemail at the number listed below.

Looking forward to a great school year,

Ms. Kristin Rock

Kristin.rock@d300.org

224-484-4761





## Lessons

Each student will be given one 30-minute small group lesson per week. Each of these lessons are very important in order for your child to progress. They will be taken out of class for this lesson during a time I will arrange with their classroom teacher. It is ultimately the student's responsibility to make sure they arrive to his or her lesson on the correct day and time.

If a student has forgotten their instrument on a lesson day, he or she must still come to the lesson. I will usually have them taking notes and make sure they know what to be practicing for the following week. If a student must miss the lesson on a day they are in school, they should make arrangements with me to have their lesson time switched. It is important for student success that they bring their instrument to each lesson.

## Rehearsals

Full orchestra rehearsals will begin in October. Rehearsals will also be held once per week for 30 minutes, during the school day. Each student will be expected to have their instrument, music, and a pencil with them at rehearsal. If a student has forgotten to bring their instrument to school on a rehearsal day, they are still expected to be at the rehearsal. Every time a student is absent from a rehearsal, he or she has missed important musical concepts.





# Classroom Rules

In an orchestra, it is important that everyone works together, cooperates, and respects each other. I want to make sure that orchestra is a positive experience for all students. The following are guidelines for students to follow in the orchestra room:

1. Respect yourself, others, your instrument, and your environment.
2. Come to lessons and rehearsals on-time and prepared. (Instruments, music, and a pencil)
3. When the teacher steps in front of the music stand, it should be quiet with your focus on me.
4. Students are responsible for their own instruments and should not touch other students' instruments without permission.

More Than One Warning: The student will speak individually with the teacher after class to discuss his or her behavior.

More Than Two Warnings: Student will return to their classroom, and may miss recess

If rules continue to be broken, parents will be contacted by the teacher.

## Grades

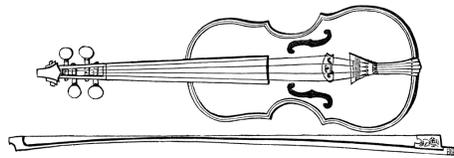


Students will receive a grade for orchestra each quarter. The grade will be based on showing proper care for their instrument, utilizing proper playing techniques, applying music reading skills, and showing proper performance expectations.



# Practice

Without a regular practice routine, your child will not be able to improve and excel at playing their instrument. In order to develop the muscles necessary for playing his/her instrument, I ask that each student practice at least 5 days per week, starting at 10-20 minutes each day. Consistency in practice is very important. Students will be given a handout at each of their weekly lessons. On the handout, there will be instructions for what your child should practice and a weekly practice log. Students are to have this sheet signed by a parent or guardian weekly. Lesson handouts that contain practice logs will be posted on the orchestra website weekly so that students can print and download extra copies.



## Tips for Successful Practicing!

**Slow It Down**—Play each section as slow as you can. Try for accuracy in getting every note exactly right. Speed it up once you've got it!

**Chunks**—Break down the music into small parts. Start with just two notes. Once you get the two notes right, add one more, and then another, etc.

**Pencil Power**—Write it in! Take the time to write note names or fingerings that might be challenging for you.

**Repetition**—Play each section through five times perfectly before going on. If you can't play it five times perfectly, go back and start and number one and try again.

**Keep It Simple**—Break everything down into its smallest part. Go back to the basics and simplify the passage that you are working on. Don't stress!

**Sing**—Sing the section that you are practicing out loud. Try to sing it with the note names.

**Record Yourself**—Record yourself on the computer, a phone, or tape. Listening to yourself on a recording is a great way to hear what is really coming out of your instrument.

**Take A Break!**—Go on to something that you do well then come back to the challenging section. If you are getting frustrated, take a short break and when you feel better practice the challenging section again.

# Parent Involvement



## What to do:

To give your child the best possible support you should:

- Offer compliments and encouragement regularly.
- Encourage your child to talk with you about his/her lessons.
- Make sure that your child brings their instrument every week on orchestra day
- Make sure your child's instrument is in good working order.
- Listen to your child practice and acknowledge improvement.
- Expose your child to a wide variety of music, including concerts and recitals.
- Encourage your child to play for family and friends.

## What not to do:

Your child's progress will be greatly enhanced if you:

- Do not use practice as a punishment.
- Do not insist your child play for others when they don't want to.
- Do not ridicule or make fun of mistakes or less-than-perfect playing.
- Do not start your child on an instrument that is in poor working order.
- Do not expect rapid progress and development in the beginning.

## If your child loses interest:

In the event that your child loses interest in his or her music studies:

- Discuss the situation with your child to determine why their interest is declining.
- Talk to the orchestra director to see what might be done to rekindle their enthusiasm.
- Offer increased enthusiasm and support.



## Repairs and Supplies

***Please do not attempt any home repairs!*** This can destroy the value of the instrument and worsen the problem with the instrument. If anything breaks or needs adjusting, please bring it to me. I will fix it or have the instrument taken to Cassandra Strings for repair. The instrument will be picked up from your child's school for repair, and delivered the next week after being fixed. The student will receive a loaner instrument while theirs is being fixed.

If you are in need of any supplies, please contact me or Cassandra Strings and they will have the supplies delivered to the school.



## Important Phone Numbers

**Ms. Kristin Rock:** 224-484-4761

**Cassandra Strings:** 847-458-7386

**My E-mail Address:** [Kristin.rock@d300.org](mailto:Kristin.rock@d300.org)

