



Jenison Junior High School Orchestra Handbook 2019 - 2020



Carol Johnson, Josh Zallar, & Becky Bush, Directors
Dan Scott, High School Director

Dear Junior High Orchestra Students and Parents,

Hello and welcome to another exciting year with the Jenison Orchestras! This year promises to be another outstanding one with all of our wonderful Junior High Orchestra students! We are looking forward to a great year of learning, fun, and fantastic performances! Mrs. Johnson is excited to get started with all three orchestras, along with Mrs. Bush in Prelude and Mr. Zallar in Cadence.

This handbook gives you all the information you will need for the school year. Read through it and make sure you contact Mrs. Johnson, Mrs. Bush, or Mr. Zallar with any questions you may have. Please pay special attention to the year's schedule of events in this handbook. It contains all of the year's orchestra events for all JH Orchestra students. We ask that you keep this handbook in your orchestra folder, so you can refer to it throughout the year. For your convenience, this handbook is now also posted online on our website www.JenisonOrchestras.org. Please bookmark the site and check back frequently, as there will be up-to-date announcements and reminders posted as often as possible.

This year, we are continuing to use the "CHARMS" website to handle all of our program's technical needs. Charms will be the place where you can check your student's account balance, get concert info, volunteer to assist our program, order orchestra apparel items, make payments online, and much more. Please read in this handbook about how to update your info in Charms. It is a very helpful tool for parents and students!

If you have any questions or concerns at any time, please don't hesitate to contact us by phone or email (below). We are very excited that you are joining us for another great year!

Sincerely,

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General Expectations in Orchestra Class

Be Prompt - Be in the classroom by the time the bell rings, and in your seat one minute after the bell rings. When the director steps on the podium, it is time for the rehearsal to start. At this time, you should be fully prepared to begin the day's rehearsal. (Instrument assembled, bow rosined, music out, pencil out, etc.)

Be Prepared - Have everything you need with you at every rehearsal. (Instrument, rosin, music, pencil, cloth, etc.)

Be Neat - Keep the room picked up, keep your instrument maintained, and have your music marked correctly in pencil.

Be Alert - Check the board at the beginning of class for any announcements. Pay attention to what is happening in class at all times, even if you are not playing. Also, be aware of any deadlines that may be approaching (practice records, permission slips, order forms, playing tests, etc.)

Be Flexible - Things will not always go as planned, so be willing to compromise for the good of the group.

Be Responsible - Set goals for yourself and work toward those goals. Do what you are expected to do, and help everyone else to do the same.

Be Willing to Work - In order to have a successful orchestra, every member must make individual efforts and be self-motivated. It is important that each member of the orchestra practice and learn their own parts, so that the group can reach its full potential.

Use Time Wisely - Plan to come directly to the orchestra room so you will be ready to play when class begins. If the director is rehearsing another section of the orchestra, quietly use that time to check fingerings, rhythms, or listen carefully. Never waste time.

Be Respectful - Treat the organization, the facilities, the music, and the people you are around as you would wish you and your property to be treated. To earn respect for yourself, it is important to be respectful of others, such as teachers, substitutes, chaperones, and your fellow classmates.

Practice Guidelines for Orchestra

Practicing individually at home is an important and necessary way to improve at playing an instrument. However, some students (and parents) are unsure exactly what should happen during that practice time. Here are some helpful suggestions from Mrs. Johnson to make sure practice time is useful and productive for you!

1. Set up a designated place to practice in your house.

A room with a door works well for practicing, both for sound-dampening reasons, and for getting rid of distractions while practicing. It's best if a student has a music stand to use, but pinning the music to a bulletin board (or taping it to a door or wall) will work too! (Folding music stands are available at local music stores, or from the school for around \$15, if you'd like to purchase one.)

2. Try to spread out your practice sessions.

The current practice requirement for full credit is 90 minutes per week. (Obviously, fewer minutes per week is worth partial credit.) It's up to you when you get those minutes done, but it's more effective (and less painful) to spread out the time. You will learn more and be a better player if you practice for 15-20 minutes on several different days, than if you cram it all in on Sunday night. ☺

3. Make sure you're always using correct posture when practicing.

Sit or stand up tall, hold the instrument up correctly, and maintain a good bow hold ALWAYS! You've heard the phrase "Practice makes perfect," right? Well, it's a lie. The truth is that "Practice makes permanent." If you always practice with bad posture, then you won't be able to play with good posture, and your musical potential will suffer. If it helps, put a small stuffed animal next to you or on your stand while you practice, and pretend he's your teacher, reminding you to check your posture and bow hand!

4. Don't just play straight through the music.

It's ok to play through each piece once or twice when you practice, but your main job is to break it down into smaller parts. Think about which sections we've been working on in class, and work on being able to play those sections perfectly. You should be practicing the challenging spots more than the easy spots. This is the only way to improve, and be a better orchestra team member. The best plan is to break down the music into smaller, more manageable 'chunks' to practice over and over, until they're perfect. Once you can play one chunk perfectly, work on another small chunk. Then, start to put the chunks together. Keep in mind that faster isn't always better. It's best to start slowly, in order to make sure every single note is accurate and perfect. When you can play something perfectly at a slow tempo, then you can start to speed it up. Using a metronome is a great way to keep a steady tempo. (Metronomes are available for purchase starting at around \$20, if you're interested, or there are MANY free metronome apps for your devices.)

5. Figure out ways to make your notes sound even better.

Are there any markings in the music you should be paying attention to? Be a good detective and find all of the dynamics, bow lifts, slurs, low or high fingerings, accidentals, tempo markings, etc. in your music. Also remind yourself about things that should be happening that aren't written on the page such as vibrato, playing in tune, and keeping a steady tempo.

6. You can play other music, too!

If your school music is going well, feel free to spend some of your practice minutes playing other music. If you take private lessons, play in a youth orchestra, or play at church, you'll want to make sure you keep practicing that music too. Practicing scales and etudes are also a great way to improve your technique. If you'd like extra music to play, there are MANY books for violin/viola/cello/bass available through the school, online, or local music stores. Mrs. Johnson has posted a list of appropriate level books for strings on the website under "Want More Music?" Many students really enjoy having these books that include movie themes, fiddle tunes, praise songs, Disney music, etc.

7. Have fun!

Find ways to make practicing more exciting and enjoyable for you! If there's a recording available of your music, play along to the CD or online sound file. Get together with friends and play music with each other. When you're ready, give informal "concerts" to your family and friends, to show off what you can do. Make sure you're enjoying being a musician, since you've worked so hard to have these skills on your instrument! That's what making music is all about!

Jenison Jr. High Orchestra Dates 2019-2020 Updated 8/15/19

Required Events for JH Orchestra Students:

Oct 15	7:30pm	6th-8 th Orchestras	Fall Concert	JCA
Dec 11	8:00pm	JH Orchestras (JH Bands@6:30)	Christmas Concert	JCA
Feb 19	6:30pm	JH Orchestras (HS Orchs@8pm)	Pre-Festival Concert	JCA
Feb 26	daytime	JH and HS Orchestras	MSBOA Festival	JCA
Apr 24	daytime	8 th Grade Orch & Band	Elementary Concerts	JCA
May 6	7:00pm	8 th Grade Orch (+5 th +HS Sym)	String Spectacular	JCA
May 20	7:30pm	6th-8 th Grade Orchestras	Spring Concert	JCA
May 29	2nd hour	JH Bands and Orchestras	Assembly for JH	JCA

Additional Events REQUIRED for Students in ENCORE Strings (2nd hour):

Dec 7	2:30-8pm	JH Encore Strings	GRSO Holiday Pops	DeVos Hall
Apr 18	all day	JH Orch/Band	Solo and Ensemble Festival	Northpoint Chr.

OPTIONAL Additional Events: (more info to come as dates get closer...)

Oct 24&26	TBA	Volunteer JH/HS Orch/Band	MSBOA All-State Auditions	TBA
Jan 11	9am-3pm	Selected JH Orch members	MSBOA Honors Orchestra	East Gr Rapids
Jan 16-18	TBA	Selected JH/HS Orch/Band	MSBOA All-State Orch/Bands	MMC/DeVos Hall
Mar 12	5-7pm	JH Orch/Band/Choir	Student Showcase	JJHS Cafeteria
Mar 20	6-11pm	JH Orch/Band	Fun Night!	Out-of-district
Apr 18	all day	JH Orch/Band (Encore Required)	Solo and Ensemble Festival	Out-of-district

Orchestra Booster Meetings (Jenison Orchestra Parents Association):

Sep 10	7:30pm	Orchestra Boosters (JOPA)	JOPA Meeting	JH Media Center
Nov 5	7:30pm	Orchestra Boosters (JOPA)	JOPA Meeting	JH Media Center
Feb 11	7:30pm	Orchestra Boosters (JOPA)	JOPA Meeting	JH Media Center
Apr 14	7:30pm	Orchestra Boosters (JOPA)	JOPA Meeting	JH Media Center



Junior High Orchestra Grading Policy

The marking period grade of each Junior High student will be a compilation of four categories. Each category will represent a percent of the student's final grade. The percentages are as follows:

25% - Concert Attendance - Orchestra students earn their 100 concert points in five ways:

- 20 Arrive in the warm-up room at or before the scheduled time
- 20 Bring all required materials/supplies
- 20 Wear all required uniform pieces
- 20 Meet behavioral expectations
- 20 Meet musical expectations

25% - Practice Records

Junior High instrumental students are required to practice at home for 90 minutes per week for full credit. Each student is required to record practice minutes in the back of his or her assignment notebook. This will be checked during the first class of each week. Maximum credit can be earned in this category by properly filling out the weekly practice records, including parent signature. (Entries without parent signature will not be accepted for credit.) Total weekly practice minutes will be averaged at the end of each marking period. Any student can make up for weeks with fewer practice minutes (due to illness, vacation, etc.) by practicing MORE in other weeks. If a student fails to turn in any practice records during a marking period, that student will not be able to receive any grade higher than a C in orchestra. **Practice records that are turned in more than two weeks late will receive zero credit.**

30% - Daily Rehearsal Skills and Technique

Maximum credit can be earned in this category by arriving to each class on time, by avoiding any unexcused absences, by being fully prepared for every class (with instrument, music, pencil, and any assignments), and by consistently contributing to class in an active, effective, appropriate, and positive manner. In addition, you must remember that food, drink, gum, talking out of turn, and playing after the director stops all distract from the rehearsal and cannot be allowed. Failure to follow any or all of these guidelines will result in the loss of your three daily points.

20% - Quizzes, Playing Tests, and Improvement

Maximum credit can be earned in this category by preparing fully for each playing test and (occasional) written quiz, and by showing steady improvement in one's playing ability. Playing tests are a chance for each student to play individually and receive specific suggestions. They are usually done by video tape during class time and you will receive written comments after a few days. Each playing test sheet should be signed by a parent and returned to your teacher within a few days for an additional five points. Some playing tests will also determine chair placement. It will be announced in class whether each playing test counts for chairs or not.

***Extra credit opportunities are offered throughout the year and can include:**

- Attendance at concerts that include live musicians. Bring in a program or parent note.
- Extra student performances that are not already getting a grade in school.
- Reports, Papers, or Projects to be determined by the director.
- Specific opportunities that will be announced throughout each marking period.

**** Concert Attendance ****

Every member of this orchestra is an extremely valuable contributor to the final musical product. As you read previously, concert attendance is required, and it is a very big part of your grade in orchestra class. Plan ahead so that work, vacations, sports, and other activities do not conflict with our concerts. If a conflict cannot be resolved and you must miss a concert, I must be notified by a parent in writing AT LEAST TWO WEEKS before the concert. This is imperative for the orchestra's sake and no late letters or emails will be accepted. If the absence is excused, we will then work out an assignment that will allow you to make up the concert points.

As always, I understand that emergencies and illnesses will occur. In this case, a simple phone call or email from a parent before the concert will be needed in order for the student to be allowed to make up the points. If a student simply does not show up for a concert, they will lose all concert points, and will not have an opportunity to make them up. Please ask Mrs. Johnson if you have questions.



Junior High Orchestra Uniform Guidelines

The look of our orchestra is just as important as our sound. It is the first impression our group makes on an audience and it distinguishes us as mature musicians. All orchestra students at the Junior High will wear a specific uniform for all concerts and festivals throughout the year. Unless otherwise noted, all students should arrive at each activity already in their uniform. Do not expect to have time to change between arriving at the concert and performing. The uniform pieces will be checked out to each orchestra student after the directors receive the student's rental deposit, and it will need to be returned at the end of the school year. You are expected to take VERY good care of your uniform throughout the year. (Don't leave it wadded up in the bottom of your closet between concerts... We want to keep them looking nice!) If there are financial concerns, the Jenison Orchestra Parent's Association can assist in getting an appropriate concert uniform. The uniform regulations are as follows:

For the ladies:

You will rent a pair of black "flowy" pants and green vest from JOPA at a cost of \$10 for the year. (This includes the cost of pants hemming and/or vest alterations.) You will provide your own white long-sleeve button-up dressy blouse, black nylons, and black flat dressy shoes. (Yes, choir girls can wear their choir shoes, if they wish.)

For the gentlemen:

You will rent a green vest from JOPA at a cost of \$5 for the year. (This includes any necessary vest alterations.) You will provide your own BLACK dress pants, BLACK shoes (not sneakers), BLACK socks, and white long-sleeve button-up dress shirt.

Be sure to check out the Jenison Orchestras Website!!!

www.JenisonOrchestras.org

We've included lots of stuff that should be really helpful to you, like:
Calendars, Handbooks, Announcements, Concert Reminders, Practice Tips, Links to Tuning Notes,
Rental Store Contact Info, JOPA info, Student Accounts, Photos, Uniform Info, Private Lesson Info,
Step-Up Instrument Info, Director Contact Info, and much more!

Please bookmark us, and visit often for the most up-to-date orchestra information!!!

Brand New Orchestra Books are Here!

Each orchestra class will be using method books in class to advance our technique and musicality skills. These books will be checked out to students for use in class and at home. It is expected that students will take care of their book and return it in excellent condition at the end of the year. Any student that loses their book or returns it in an unusable condition will be charged a replacement fee of \$10.

Jenison Orchestra Parent's Association - JOPA

The Jenison Orchestras are enthusiastically supported by the Jenison Orchestra Parent's Association. This "booster" group provides scholarships, parent support, uniform maintenance, and other extras to our orchestras. They are funded by three main fundraisers during the year. Students may sell Entertainment Books in the fall. The Jenison Orchestra "Smart Card" is our community discount card that is good at many area businesses. The card is sold just before Christmas and is an annual hit. JOPA also sponsors a spring Century Resources sale. Ongoing fundraisers are available for those who wish to participate, including Van Andel concession work and SCRIP card use. Just ask a director if you are interested in getting involved!

A portion of the profits from the JOPA fundraisers is kept in orchestra student accounts. Students can use the money in their accounts to purchase music-related materials throughout the year. Strings, shoulder-rests, rosin, music, trips, medals, lessons, camps, and fees are just some of the things students use their accounts to pay for. All money in students' accounts must be spent on music materials by graduation. The accounts do carry over from year to year.

JOPA holds meetings every other month in the Jenison Junior High Media Center. Please plan to attend as many meetings as you can as we discover new ways to show off our students' hard work.

JOPA Meetings: (JJHS Media Center)

Tuesday, Sep. 10, 2019, 7:30pm

Tuesday, Nov. 5, 2019, 7:30pm

Tuesday, Feb. 11, 2020, 7:30pm

Tuesday, Apr. 14, 2020, 7:30pm



JOPA appreciates having any and all of you on board for another wonderful year of the Jenison Orchestras!

We need YOU to log in to our new CHARMS website!!!



The Jenison Orchestra Program uses Charms to manage all of the technical aspects of our program. This website makes it much easier for parents and directors to manage their student's orchestra information. Charms is the place where you can check your student's account balance, get concert info, volunteer to assist our program, order orchestra apparel items, make payments online, and much more. We will also be using Charms to communicate with all parents and students this year.

We need every family to log on to their student's Charm account and update their contact information. You can follow these easy steps:

1. Visit JenisonOrchestras.org and scroll all the way down to the bottom of the page. In the black strip at the very bottom is a link to the Jenison Orchestras' Charms page. Click on it.
2. Log in to the Charms website using your child's student number. (Same # as their lunch code.) If you changed your account password previously, enter that password instead of student number. (If you don't remember your password, the directors can reset it for you.)
3. You can choose to change your password, or you can skip this step by clicking on any tab.
4. Click on the "PERSONAL INFORMATION" tab.
5. Confirm your student's name, enter cell phone number and carrier (if they have one), and email. (This allows the directors to email or text important reminders to your student.) The other fields are optional.
6. Below your student's information should be blue Parent/Guardian information tabs. (If not, click on the blue button labeled "Add New Adult.") **Carefully and accurately** enter/update name, cell phone number and carrier, relation, and email. (This allows the directors to email concert and program information, and also text you in the rare case of weather cancellations.) ***Please do this step for every adult that you would like to receive important orchestra information and updates.*** The other fields are not needed.
7. Click on the green button in the upper right-hand corner labeled "Update" and you're done!
8. Click on the red button in the upper left-hand corner to "EXIT CHARMS"

THANK YOU!!!

If you'd like to view a video tutorial on this process, please go to JenisonOrchestra.org and click on "Parent Resources" then "Charms Info."

2019-2020



School-Owned Cello/Bass Use Contract

Dear Family of Cello or Bass Student,

We are excited to have your student participating in the Jenison Orchestra Program! You are receiving this letter because your student has the opportunity to use a school-owned instrument during class this year. In order to be assigned a school-owned instrument to use in class, a small maintenance fee is necessary. **(If you are already renting a bass from the school, then you may disregard this form.)**

Due to the large number of low-string students in the program and the needs of our inventory, a \$30 fee will be assessed to help cover some of the yearly maintenance needs of these stringed instruments. All of the money generated by this maintenance fee is used for the care and repair of the instruments. Typical yearly maintenance may include string replacement (\$10-\$30 per string), bow repairs (\$45 per bow), open seam or crack repair (\$20 per seam), as well as other annual cleaning and replacement needs. The \$30 maintenance fee will not come close to covering the district's expense in maintaining these instruments, but it will help to ensure these instruments can be used by future students in the orchestra program.

The school-owned instruments must be well cared for by the students. Jenison Public Schools will cover the costs of repairs resulting from students' ordinary, reasonable handling and use of the instrument. Any damage from neglect, carelessness, or intentional misuse will result in additional financial responsibility on the part of your family.

Occasionally, a family wishes for their student to play their home instrument in class. If you would prefer for your student not to use a school-owned instrument during class, he or she will be expected to transport his or her home instrument back and forth each day.

If you agree to all of the above conditions, and would like to use a school-owned cello or bass during class, please complete the information below and return it with the \$30. Your signature indicates your understanding that you will be responsible for any damage that occurs to the instrument beyond the normal "wear and tear" of daily use.

Student Name _____ Student Signature _____

Parent Name _____ Parent Signature _____

Circle Instrument: Cello Bass

Student Grade: _____

Email Address: _____