

JENISON August 2025



Dear Orchestra Students and Parents,

Welcome Back!!



ORCHESTRAS

We had a wonderful summer with family and friends and hope to hear about your adventures, but most of all we cannot wait to make music with you again. We are confident that the Jenison Orchestras will continue to be a haven from the craziness of the world and a place where we can get away from it a bit and enjoy music making.

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This handbook contains all the expectations for the coming school year. **Please put the calendar dates in your personal & family calendars immediately and report any concerns to the directors.** All conflicts can be figured out with notice and communication. Please return the form on the last page to your directors by Thursday, August 28th (your students' first grade in Orchestra (25 points)). This handbook can also be found in each group's Google Classroom, as well as on our website www.JenisonOrchestras.org.

We have lots of great opportunities planned this year. At our fall concert we will be joined by touring artist Brad Phillips (<https://www.bradphillipsmusic.com/>). Brad just finished touring with Patti LuPone and often performs with Jeff Daniels. We're excited to bring him in to share non-traditional performance styles and work on some musical creativity.

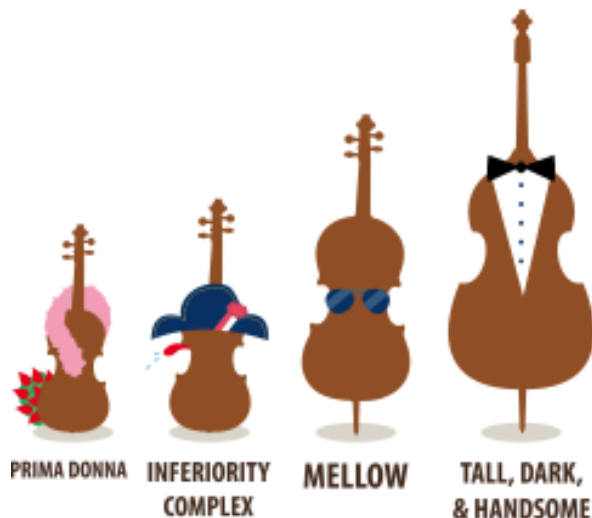
Also, of course, we will head to Orlando to perform for the "world" in November. Please catch up on any payment you have if you are behind – many more details about this will be shared soon.

As always, if you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to reach out at any time. Best wishes for a GREAT year!

Sincerely,

Mr. Scott

Mr. Harmsen



JHS Student Handbook

We will be following all Jenison High School policies as laid out in the 2025-2026 JHS Student Handbook, including but not limited to, the grading policy, the new cell phone policy, and the tardy policy. The above three policies can be found in our Google Classroom for reference.

Grading

Grades are based on preparation, participation and performance. The points for class are earned in three categories: Daily Rehearsal Technique (15%), Concert Attendance (30%), and Class Assignments (30%) and Playing Tests (25%). Our goal is a system that is 100% fair and awards you with a grade that is appropriate and not a surprise.

Daily Rehearsal Technique (15%):

An orchestra is only as good as its rehearsals!! No musical ensemble can be good without constant attention and focus during the rehearsal. Talking (out of turn), playing (after the director has stopped), tardiness, phones, tablets, smart watches, earbuds, food, drink, and gum all distract from the rehearsal and cannot be accepted. Musicians should also have all their music and a pencil at every rehearsal. Failure to follow these rules will result in a deduction of points from your Daily Rehearsal Technique Grade.

Concert Attendance (30%):

Every member of this orchestra is an invaluable contributor to the final musical product. Therefore this is the largest portion of your grade. You are expected to be at every performance of your orchestra. You are also expected to be in an appropriate concert uniform. Uniform violations will result in a loss of points for the concert. Absence from a concert will result in loss of ALL points for the concert. The only excused absence is one due to illness, family emergency, or prior approval from the director. Excused absences are not permitted without a **minimum of two weeks notice** to the director. Plan ahead so work, vacations, and other activities do not conflict with our concerts or rehearsals. Check your sports schedule as soon as you receive it and inform Mr. Scott or Mr. Harmsen immediately of potential problems so we may resolve them. Concert make-ups must be planned at least 2 weeks prior to the concert in order for credit to be applied.

Class Assignments (30%):

Regular assignments will be given to be turned in electronically. These include, but are not limited to, recorded excerpts, written work, semester letters, or other materials to be turned in. Most of this will be done through Google Classroom and will be assigned and tracked in Powerschool.

Playing/Chair Tests (25%)

Twice per marking period students will be assigned more in-depth performance exams that are longer in length with more detailed expectations. These tests will be used for seating, exams, or other types of assessment.

Cell Phone Policy

When students arrive to the Orchestra Room, they **MUST** place their cell phone, headphones/earbuds, and smart watches in one of the designated cell phone caddies located in the room. Students are not to access or use their phones, headphones, or other devices during class time. This is the same expectation as all other JHS classes. Please see the JHS Student Handbook for the full Cell Phone Use policy ("No Cell Bell to Bell").

Equipment

It is every musician's responsibility to keep up his/her instrument and supplies. Mr. Scott & Mr. Harmsen have an inventory of supplies. Students may also order items on their own through catalogs or online stores. Both Catalogs and web-sites can be obtained from the directors. Please do your best to keep your equipment in top shape so that it best displays your musical abilities.

JOPA

Jenison Orchestra Parents Association

The Jenison Orchestras are enthusiastically supported by the Jenison Orchestra Parents' Association. This "booster" group provides scholarships, parent support, uniform maintenance, and other extras to our orchestras. They are funded by two fund raisers during the year. The Jenison Orchestra "Smart Card" is our community discount card that is good at many area businesses. The card is sold in the fall and is an annual success. JOPA also sponsors a spring fund raising sale.

The entire JPS Music Program benefits immensely from families who volunteer to serve concessions at Van Ansel Arena. This fundraiser has brought in thousands for student ledgers, scholarship, trips, and more. If you're interested in participating in this wonderful fundraiser please reach out to a director.

A portion of the profits from the JOPA fundraisers is kept in orchestra student accounts. Students can use the credits in their accounts to purchase music-related materials throughout the year. Strings, shoulder-rests, rosin, music, medals, and fees are just some of the things students use their accounts to pay for. All credits 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 at 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

Tuesday, Sept. 2nd, 2025, 7:30 pm

Tuesday, Nov. 4th, 2025, 7:30 pm

Tuesday, Feb. 10th, 2026, 7:30 pm

Tuesday, April 14th, 2026, 7:30 pm

My BlueBoard

The JPS Music Department is updating its online management system. Charms has been discontinued and we have transferred all materials and information to myBlueboard. This new software is an update to the Charms system and will give our families easy access to the information from fundraisers, student accounts, purchases, and communication. If you would like to log into your account please go to jenisonorch.myblueboard.com. If you do not have an account, click on the "register" link near the bottom and create your account. If there are any questions, please contact your director at your earliest convenience.

UNIFORMS

The look of our orchestra is almost as important as our sound. It is the first impression of our group and distinguishes us as mature musicians. All uniform requirements must be followed for full credit for a concert. You will be informed if your uniform does not meet the requirements and must correct the problem. If there are financial problems, the Jenison Orchestra Parents Association can assist in getting an appropriate concert uniform.

Concert Uniform Requirements

Concert attire for all of our concerts (unless otherwise notified) is "concert black". Specifics are as follows:

- A BLACK dress shirt (No t-shirts, please). Sleeves should go to the wrist. In a few exceptions, a student may wear medium-sleeve dress shirts, but long-sleeves are strongly preferred.
- Solid black dress pants, skirt, or dress (No jeans, jeggings, yoga pants, or sweatpants allowed). Anyone playing cello should wear pants or skirt/dress that permits you to sit comfortably to play the instrument properly. Also, skirts and dresses MUST BE at or longer than ankle length.
- Black dress socks or nylon stockings.
- Solid black dress shoes with no other colors, logos, etc.
- Modest (if any) jewelry. Don't let it get in the way of your playing.
- If you are found to be wearing inappropriate concert dress during a concert, points will be deducted from your grade, and you may be either required to change or not allowed to perform in the concert.
- If you need any assistance with acquiring the necessary concert uniform items for any reason, please do not hesitate to ask Mr. Scott or Mr. Harmsen.

Uniform Items for order

Gentlemen: A uniform black dress shirt must be purchased through the orchestra program to wear at concerts. This shirt will ensure the uniformity and dress expected at orchestra concerts. A tie will also be provided for concert use. Cost of the shirt and tie rental is \$15. JOPA will provide these items to families in financial need.

Ladies: A uniform black dress shirt in a female cut is available for purchase, but not required. This option is provided as a convenience to families. The dress shirt can be purchased through the orchestra program for \$15. This is not required for female students.

Orchestra Awards

All graduating seniors receive a gift from their directors and JOPA, awarded at the final concert. Seniors are our leaders and are recognized for their commitment to this program.

National School Orchestra Association's Director's Award - this award will be given to an outstanding musical leader in the Jenison Symphony Orchestra. This award recognizes musical achievement, excellence, and leadership.

Jenison Orchestra Leadership Award - this award will be given to a senior orchestra member whose spirit and leadership sets the example for the orchestra student. This student will display excellence in character on a daily basis throughout their orchestra career.

Jenison Orchestra Outstanding Student Award - this award will be given to a senior orchestra member whose spirit and commitment sets an example for the members of the orchestra program. This student will display excellence in character and a demonstrated commitment to excellence on a daily basis throughout their orchestra career.

H.S. Orchestra Calendar 2025-2026

<u>Date</u>	<u>Event</u>	<u>Ensemble</u>	<u>Location</u>
Wed., Oct. 15th, 7:30 pm	Fall Concert	All	JCA
Sun., Nov. 23rd 6 - 8 p.m.	Luggage Drop-Off	Disney Trip participants	HS
Nov. 24 - Nov. 30	Disney Trip	Optional	Orlando
Wed., Dec. 3rd, 7:00 pm	5th Grade Concert	Concert & Sinfonia	JCA
Mon., Dec. 8th, 3 - 4 p.m.	Combined Rehearsal	Concert, Sinfonia, Band	HS
Thurs., Dec. 11th, 7:30 pm	H.S. Christmas Concert	Concert & Sinfonia	JCA
Fri., Dec. 12th, 7:30 pm	H.S. Christmas Concert	Symphony & Chamber	JCA
Jan. 22nd-24th	MSBOA All-State	OPTIONAL	DeVos
Sat, Jan. 31st	Solo & Ensemble Festival	OPTIONAL	Kent City
Tues., Feb. 17th, 7:30 pm	Pre-Festival Concert	All	JCA
Thurs., Feb. 26th	District Orch. Festival	All	JCA
Sat, Mar. 21st	State S&E Festival	OPTIONAL	Portage
Mar. 19-21 & 26-28	MUSICAL	OPTIONAL	JCA
Mar. 31-Apr. 2	H.S. Orchestra Auditions	All	H.S.
Wed., Apr. 29th, 7:00 pm	String Spectacular	Symphony & Chamber	JCA
Mon., Dec. 8th, 3 - 4 p.m.	Combined Rehearsal	Concert, Sinfonia	HS
Fri., May 8th, 7:30 pm	Spring Concert	All	JCA
Th., May 21st, 4:30 pm	High School Graduation	All	H.S.

Symphony Orchestra Rehearsals

JHS has a wonderful symphony orchestra tradition for over 40 years. This ensemble requires the combining of 3 different groups of musicians, our top band students, symphony strings, and chamber orchestra. In order to make this wonderful performance opportunity successful we require a few after school rehearsals to assemble all our forces. Please reserve these dates in your calendar if you are a member of Chamber or Symphony Orchestra.

Wed., Nov. 19th 3 - 4:15

Wed., Dec. 3rd 3 - 4:15

Wed., Dec. 10th 3 - 4:15

Wed., Jan. 28th 3 - 4:15

Wed., Feb. 4th 3 - 4:15

Wed., Feb. 11th 3 - 4:15

Wed., Apr. 15th 3 - 4:15

Wed., Apr. 22nd 3 - 4:15

First Week Check-list

Please detach & return the form below by Thursday, August 28th!
(25 points; your first grade in Orchestra!)

_____ I have read the letter above and have reserved the days of the orchestra concerts on my calendar.
I will report any conflicts to Mr. Scott or Mr. Harmsen immediately.

_____ Cello & Bass Players - I have / will paid my instrument usage fee (see the School-Owned Cello /
Bass Use Contract for details).

_____ Males: I understand the uniform requirements and will purchase my black dress slacks, dress
shoes, and socks in time for the first concert. (Tuxedo fittings will happen in early
October)

_____ I have my black dress shirt from last year for concert this year.

_____ I need to purchase a concert dress shirt (\$15) and have turned that money
in with this form.

_____ Females: I understand the uniform requirements and will purchase my own apparel in time for
the fall concert. I will confirm that my purchase follows the guidelines set in this handbook.

Student's Name

Student's Signature Date

Parent's Name

Parent's Signature Date

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 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 rehairs (\$50 per bow), open seam or crack repair (\$25 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 (Checks payable to Jenison Public Schools). 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: _____

_____ Check here if you'd like to use your orchestra account to pay this \$30 fee.