

Welcome to the Harrison Symphony Orchestra!

The Importance of Attitude

It is not who you are, but who you are willing to become...

The greatest factor that will help you to be successful is your **attitude**. This is not only true in music, but in life. You must be dedicated and work hard to reach your potential. Come to class *wanting* to play better than you did the day before and *expecting* to do so because you came prepared.

"I am convinced that life is 10% what happens to me and 90% how I react to it. And so it is with you... We are in charge of our attitudes."

Chuck Swindoll

The Individual and the Group

You are expected to consistently work at a high level. You should spend time daily practicing individually outside of class. The result of this individual practice is two-fold: first, you will become a better musician; second, the entire group will improve.

You are part of a group: when you don't produce, it hurts everyone.

Foundations...

- *The Orchestra will only be as good as your attitude and your contribution.*
- *Believe that only your best is good enough.*
- *Be humble in your success; demonstrate class in all situations.*
- *Exhibit enthusiasm for practice and understand the need for repetition.*
- *Be one of those students who is always "there."*

"There are only two options regarding commitment. You're either in or you're out. There's no such thing as life in-between."

Pat Riley

Table of Contents

- I. Attendance
- II. Grades
- III. Adjunct and Small Group Instruction / Guest Artists
- IV. The Music Facility
- V. Music and Folders/Media Materials
- VI. Instrument Cleaning and Maintenance
- VII. School-Owned Instruments and Performance Attire
- VIII. Rehearsal Reminders & Practice Tips
- IX. Orchestra Officers
- X. Ensembles
- XI. Orchestra Awards & Special Recognitions
- XII. Miscellaneous

Expectations for Symphony Members

- *Make a genuine effort to learn and improve daily.*
- *Be honest and fair with others.*
- *Be responsible and assume the consequences of your actions or inactions.*
- *Be regular in attendance, on time, and account for all absences in advance.*
- *Be personally clean, neat, and presentable including appropriate hairstyles and piercings.*

Expectations for Symphony Directors

- *Provide the group with a music education as it relates to performance and critical listening.*
- *Plan each day's assignment and encourage daily progress of the entire orchestra.*
- *Assess each member's musical and technical progress and suggest pedagogical and musical ideas for improvement.*
- *Grade the progress of each member, including some or all of the following: rehearsals, performances, playing tests, and any other work that benefits the program and the student.*
- *Separate/dismiss students that are not adding to the program due to poor attitude and/or lack of improvement.*

I. Attendance

Membership in the **H***S***O** automatically includes mandatory attendance at all rehearsals, sectionals, lectures, lessons, and performances. This includes component group rehearsals and sectional rehearsals. **If a student is accepted into an All-State or All-County ensemble, attendance at all rehearsals and the concert is also considered mandatory and, therefore, will be a graded event.** Absence due to serious illness, medical emergencies, or family-related death will be excused. However, the Director should be given prior notice and it should be understood that it will be the student's responsibility to apply the extra-

credit opportunities in this Handbook to offset the points lost. Unexcused absences are a **major factor in grading** and will likely result in the drop of at least one letter grade. *Additionally, determination will be made by the Director as to whether concert participation will be allowed.* All activities scheduled on the calendar are a part of the curriculum. Specific arrangements must be made with the directors in event of conflicts with **other school activities**. **Communication** from the student beforehand and in a timely manner is the key component in this area.

The **yearly calendar** is distributed to all members as well as posted in the Orchestra room as well as on our online Google calendar. The major performances of the year are listed on this calendar however, it is impossible to list every performance for the year in August. For this reason, **monthly calendars** are also published online – usually near the end of each month for the next month.

It is the student's responsibility to stay aware of Symphony calendar activities. Students are expected to be in attendance at ALL calendared events.

II. Grades

Students' grade will be based on the following categories:

1. Daily Musicianship
2. Playing Tests
3. Rehearsals
4. Performances
5. Jury Performance
6. Extra Credit

1. Daily Musicianship

Students will be assessed in their performance in class. These weekly observations will occur on a regular basis for a total of 20 points. The following formula will be used:

- “Exceeding” musical expectations = 4 points per day
- “Approaching” musical expectations = 3 points per day
- Expectations “Not Met” = 2 points per day
- “Incomplete” = 0 points per day – This designation is reserved for absences.

Students who earn grades of “A” consistently demonstrate outstanding progress in relation to principles of good musicianship including:

- tone quality (beauty, control)
- technique (articulation, precision, and facility)
- tonal and rhythmic accuracy
- intonation
- expressiveness (phrasing and style)
- balance (dynamics – personal, ensemble, and sectional)

Students who earn grades of “A” consistently exhibit interest in their personal development and the improvement of their section. They

- show independence and resourcefulness in assisting with rehearsals and performances.
- excellence in general motivation level/attitude (including reaction to criticism, etc.), and rehearsal readiness.

These criteria apply as well to after-school rehearsals and component groups (Pit Orchestra, Wind Symphony, etc.). Students may refer to the rubric on the last page of the handbook as a general performance assessment guide.

Other Infractions counted in the Weekly Grade - Points may also be deducted from weekly grade for the following:

- lack of materials (i.e. instrument in working order, music, pencil, etc.)
- not being ready to play in a timely fashion
- lack of attention/response a conductor
- not playing to potential
- music left out after rehearsal

2. Playing Tests

Students will be given a formal performance assessment (playing test) at least once every nine weeks. These assessments are meant to form short goals for home practice and help motivate students in learning their parts. Assessments can be live or pre-recorded. Students may refer to the rubric on the last page of the handbook as a general performance assessment guide.

3. Rehearsals

After-school rehearsals will be worth 50 points per rehearsal. Points will be earned based on the student's performance during the rehearsal. See criteria listed under Daily Musicianship. Students may refer to the rubric on the last page of the handbook as a general performance assessment guide.

4. Performances

Students who earn grades of "A" arrive on time (early), are dressed appropriately, perform according to their ability, and stay after to help the group by cleaning up. Points awarded for concert performance total 100 point per performance.

Points will be deducted from student grades for the following infractions:

- unexcused non-attendance (100 points)
- unexcused tardiness (varies)
- inappropriate dress (15 points)
- inappropriate concert etiquette (15 points)
- not playing to potential (20 points)
- leaving without helping cleanup (10 points)

5. Jury Performance

Each student will perform, as part of their expected musical progression, a solo piece that demonstrates satisfactory musical development. **An unacceptable performance will result in the student being placed on Artistic Probation.** Refer to the guidelines on Artistic Probation for more information on this topic. Music performed for the Jury should be chosen from the American String Teacher Solo List, or suitable literature as approved by the Symphony Directors. **All titles are to be approved before the Jury performance.**

Criteria for musical progress will be expected as follows:

- 9th Grade: Grade III or higher
10th Grade: Grade III or higher
11th Grade: Grade IV or higher
12th Grade: Grade V or higher

*or director-approved substitute solo piece.

6. Extra Credit

It is impossible for an individual student to “make up” the time spent in a group rehearsal, whether that rehearsal occurs during and after school. Playing tests on the material covered in missed rehearsals may be required to offset time missed due to absence. However, the most effective way for HSO members to recoup points lost is to request extra-credit points to be applied toward the event(s) missed when they participate in outside activities. Extra credit may only be applied for and awarded during the nine weeks grading period during which the activity occurs.

Extra Credit Points will be applied when the student requests and provides documentation to the Director:

1. *Written Critique of audio file as assigned by the Directors* varies
2. *Attending a summer music camp (1st grading period only)*..... 25+
3. *Audition for All-State Band/Orchestra (1st grading period only)*..... 15+
4. *Making and participating in All-State Band/Orchestra (3rd grading period only)*..... 30+
5. *State Solo & Ensemble participation (3rd grading period only)*..... 10+
6. *Superior rating at State Solo & Ensemble MPA (3rd grading period only)* 15+
7. *Any other suggestion with **prior** Director approval* varies

Special Note: It is the student’s responsibility to communicate with his/her Director to receive any points earned. No communication on the student’s part means the student will not receive any earned extra credit.

Artistic Warning and Artistic Probation

Music is a discipline that can only see development through hard work and dedication. It is the responsibility of each member to grow artistically and to meet the requirements of the program. At times, some students do not take their artistic development seriously. In these cases, a student may receive the status of artistic warning or probation. A student will be notified verbally for artistic warning and the parents will be notified by a letter stating the reason or reasons for artistic probation.

- A student may be placed on **artistic warning** for:
 - Low achievement on a jury
 - An unexcused absence from rehearsal
 - Tardiness to rehearsals or performances
 - Lack of individual musical preparation
 - Poor displays of professional attitude
 - Lack of respect toward ensemble members and orchestra staff

Once placed on warning, students will have nine weeks to show improvement. After this period, the directors will either remove the student from warning status or make a recommendation to the Administration as to be placed on artistic probation.

- A student may be placed on **artistic probation** for:
 - Orchestra grade reaches a “C”
 - Failure to pass a jury
 - Receiving the status of artistic warning 2 times
 - 3 unexcused absences from rehearsals
 - Excessive tardiness to rehearsals or performances

Once placed on probation, students will have nine weeks to show improvement. After this period, the directors will make a recommendation to the Administration as to whether the student has shown sufficient improvement and be fully reinstated, face further correction, or be removed from the program.

III. Adjunct and Small Group Instruction / Guest Artists

A key component of musical and technical development is private instrument instruction. Although group rehearsals address some aspects of instrumental technique, it is through private instruction that the student will truly reach his/her full instrument performing potential. In private instruction students will not only learn valuable solo repertoire but will also receive instruction in the fundamentals of instrumental technique. When the student obtains a solid foundation in the playing technique of his/her instrument, the sky is the limit in the musical opportunities available.

IV. The Music Facility

1. **All** members are to assist in keeping the entire school facility clean and neat.
2. Students are allowed in the facility for music purposes only. If students are present after school for reasons other than musical ones, they are to wait in the front of the school after they finish until 4:30 to wait for the Harrison shuttle. The music facility is off limits for "hanging around until the shuttle comes."
3. Students planning on practicing individually after school should clear their plans with their director 24 hours in advance. **Otherwise, students should practice at home.**
4. Practice rooms are to be used for practice only.
5. The Music Library is to be used by designated helpers only.
6. The Instrument Locker Room will be open before and after school and before class only.
7. Lunch items are to be kept in book lockers only – NOT Instrument Lockers. Repeated violations will result in suspension of instrument locker privileges.
8. Personal items left in the facility will be viewed as unwanted and will be removed without warning.
9. Neither the Symphony nor its directors will be responsible for personal items stolen from unlocked lockers.

Students will not consume food/drink or gum in the music facilities without permission.

V. Music and Folders/Media Materials

All members are to show respect for music issued. Music must not be "stuffed" in the folder; bent or otherwise mutilated. It is each member's responsibility to maintain his/her folder and contact a Student Leader in the event a part is lost. **This must be done so that rehearsal interruptions are kept to a minimum.** Students may be assessed monetarily for any and all lost materials.

Orchestra Music

- Some folders will be shared for performance and rehearsal.
Each student should have his/her own copy of the music for practice.
- Number measures and make marks neatly in pencil only.
- When not in use, the concert folders will be stored in the music folio cabinet.
No other location is acceptable.
- Replacement of concert music will cost 25 cents per page.

VI. Instrument Cleaning and Maintenance

It is each member's responsibility to clean his/her own instrument (especially school-owned instruments) monthly or as often as needed. Students/parents should seek out a professional repairman for individually owned instruments. Do not attempt repairs on your own without proper guidance

- Instruments should be wiped clean of any rosin after each playing.
- Areas of high contact with your skin may need extra cleaning (bow hold, chinrest, fingerboard, neck, pegs). Only use natural cleaning products without any alcohol or solvent, like *Method All Purpose* cleaner. Spray the cleaning solution on a soft cloth, not directly on the instrument! Wipe off dirt, sweat, and makeup. *Method All Purpose* cleaner may also be used to gently clean the front, back, sides, and scroll of your instrument. Instrument varnish is very delicate. Test a small area first to be certain the varnish is not damaged.
- **Never use alcohol or solvent-based products. Alcohol, solvent, and hand sanitizer will damage the varnish on your instrument.**
- Bows should be kept in good working order by loosening the hair before storing the instrument.
- Bows will need to have a full set of bow hair, and will need rehairing from time to time.
- Instrument bridges should be checked for straightness every day.
- All violinists and violists must have a quality shoulder rest, and cellists and bassists must have a rock stop.
- String players must also own their own rosin. Use only quality brands such as Hill, Bernardel, Guillaume or Moytra Gold (violin, viola, and cello) or Petz, Nyman or Pops (bass).
- Strings should be replaced every six months (violin and viola) and every year (cello and bass).

Preferred brands of strings:

Violin: Pirastro Evah Pirazzi, Pirastro Obbligato, Thomastik Vision

Viola: Pirastro Evah Pirazzi, Pirastro Obbligato, Larsen, Jargar

Cello: Larsen (A or D), Jargar, Tomastik Spirocore (G or C), D'Addario Kaplan

Bass: Thomastik Belcanto, D'Addario Helicore

VII. School-Owned Instruments and Performance Attire

The school owns many larger, more expensive instruments. The directors issue these instruments for the school year as well as for the summer months. **At the time of issue, the member will be asked to pay a rental fee (\$50 for the school year and \$20 for a secondary instrument,).** The contract signed at the time of issue states that the rental fee does not relieve the student of the responsibility of caring for the instrument (including payment for regular maintenance and repair fees if needed), and providing the necessary essentials for performance. **The student will be financially responsible for any damages or loss incurred during the rental period.** All school-owned instruments repairs must be done with director's approval.

Formal Concert Attire

Boys

1. Black Tuxedo Jacket/Pants
2. White Tuxedo shirt
3. Black Bow-tie & Cummerbund
4. Black dress shoes and black socks

Girls

1. Black Symphony Dress
2. Black stockings
3. Black close-toed dress shoes
with no more than a moderate heel

- Boys may rent the Orchestra tuxedo jackets and pants from the school for a yearly fee **(\$50)** or purchase their own.
- Girls may rent the Orchestra dress from the school for a yearly fee **(\$50)** or purchase their own.

VIII. Rehearsal Reminders & Practice Tips

1. *“To be early is to be on time. To be on time is to be late!”*
2. Respect, Courtesy, and Attentiveness – No talking when a director is on the podium.
3. Be attentive even when instruction is being given to another section.
4. Remain focused even when you don’t feel like it.
5. Immediately arrange music in proper order as indicated either verbally or on the board.
6. Have your pencil in front of you on your stand.
7. Sit on the front $\frac{1}{4}$ of your chair with good posture. Always work for a beautiful tone.
8. Put your instrument and music away in its locker at the end of rehearsal - lock the locker.
9. Practice the music you CANNOT play. Practice it slowly and with a metronome. Gradually work the trouble spots up to the proper tempo.
10. Don’t be afraid to ask for help.

IX. Student Leadership

Principal Players/Section Leaders

1. Provide energetic leadership in all rehearsals and performances.
2. Enforce all rules and maintain order and equity among members of your section.
3. Work in conjunction with other Section Leaders and the Directors when necessary.
4. Promote group spirit (*esprit de corps*) and positive morale.
5. Inspect and keep instrument storage area neat and clean. Encourage all members to do the same.

Section Leaders will be appointed by the Director according to factors including model musicianship as well as personal leadership qualities. It is important to note that Section Leaders, in addition to being fine musicians, must be able to work with and lead others. They are expected to work with directors and section members by making musical decisions for the section and aiding section members with performance issues by problem-solving music parts in a manner that is uplifting to individual members and to the group as a whole.

X. Ensembles

Harrison Symphony Orchestra – This is the primary ensemble in the Orchestra Department. The group focuses on full orchestra music from 1700-present with an emphasis on high-quality group performance through dedicated individual practice and musicianship.

Wind Symphony – This ensemble is comprised of the wind and percussion students of the *Harrison Symphony* and the *Harrison Jazz Orchestra*. The group focuses on band and wind ensemble literature that will expose players to symphonic wind literature and challenge all players in terms of pedagogical development.

Chamber Orchestra – This ensemble is reserved for the advanced string players in the *Symphony*. Students audition for this ensemble in May of each year.

Philharmonic Orchestra - This ensemble is comprised of string players not performing in the Chamber Orchestra. The group focuses on string literature that enhances the pedagogical and developmental success of the members.

Chamber Winds – Membership in this group is by audition. The group performs at community events, and at the annual Chamber Orchestra concert. Membership rotates because of the varying nature of the literature. General seating is as follows: 2 Flutes, 2 Oboes, 2 Clarinets, 2 Bassoons, 2-4 Horns.

String Quartet – This ensemble is comprised of the first two violinists, first violist, and first cellist of the HSO. Students will represent the school as they perform for school sponsored or private events. Some performances will be paid and others will not be paid. It is expected that all members of the quartet participate in both paid and unpaid events.

In event a quartet member cannot attend an event, he or she must notify the HSO director in advance AND find a director-approved replacement who can fill in as a substitute. **All privately contracted gigs outside of Harrison School for the Arts will be considered separate from these guidelines and therefore the group will not be referred to as the Harrison String Quartet.**

XI. Orchestra Awards & Special Recognitions

Awards are given for loyalty, dependability, and outstanding contributions to the program. Participation in District and/or State level Solo & Ensemble Music Performance Assessments, All-State Band or Orchestra, All-County Band or Orchestra also receives special recognition.

1. National School Orchestra Association Award
This award is given to the most outstanding member(s) of the Orchestra in terms of individual and ensemble musicianship and group leadership. This person is a leader in all areas – musical and extra-musical. The award is reserved for Seniors and is awarded by each of the Directors.
2. Director's Award for Orchestra
This award is given to outstanding member(s) in terms of musicianship, participation, effort, and service to the group. This person goes above and beyond the basic requirements and exceeds the expectations an Orchestra member.
3. Leonard Bernstein Musicianship Award
In his long career, Bernstein made an indelible mark on the musical world as a conductor, composer, and teacher. This award honors students whose musical contributions, dedication, and creativity set them apart as deserving of the highest recognition of their achievements.
4. Outstanding Musicianship
This award is given in recognition of superior musical contribution to the group through solo performance, section leadership, and/or dependability in relation to individual musical performance. It may be given to students from all grade levels.
5. Outstanding Service
This award is given in recognition of extra-musical service to the group or Directors. It is awarded to members who go above and beyond the average contribution through, for example, helping move equipment without being asked, or simply being there to do anything that needs to be done. It may be given to students from all grade levels.
6. Outstanding Progress
This award is given to any musician who makes great strides on his/her instrument during the year; one who shows intense dedication to becoming a better musician through individual practice. This is a student who makes the group better because he/she works hard to improve every day. The award may be given to students from all grade levels.

XII. Miscellaneous Items

Seating Assignments

Seating assignments are set and rotated solely by the Directors. The assignments are determined with the strengths and weaknesses of the entire group in mind and to allow each player to develop to his/her own musical potential.

Students participate in seating auditions. All students will be placed into an order that will benefit the entire orchestra both musically and educationally. Therefore, students will not be seated in order by ability. Additionally, the seating will rotate throughout the year to give each student the opportunity to perform in different areas of their section.

Student Conductor at District MPA

Orchestras/Bands have the option of presenting a student conductor at District Music Performance Assessment. The student conductor will conduct the Symphony Orchestra/Wind Symphony and receive a rating and comments after the stage performance. The student will audition and be chosen by the Directors and is limited to current junior or senior students in the Harrison Symphony. Repertoire and rehearsal time will be decided by the Directors.

Perception and the Public

Because of the size and nature of the organization, discipline will be strict. Members are constantly on display and must always be aware of the importance of good behavior. You are part of something larger than yourself: you represent the *Symphony*, the school, and our community at large. Bad conduct casts a negative reflection on the entire group. Any student who casts discredit on the group by his/her conduct, in or out of class, is a liability. **In such cases, students will be subject to separation from or even dismissal from the group.** In cases of separation, students will not be allowed to rehearse or perform with the group at the discretion of the directors and will instead be required to complete alternative assignments. Dismissal means the students will cease to be a member of the group.

We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence then is not an act, but a habit. – Aristotle

Performance Rubric

An example of an “A” performance:

Intonation is accurate throughout, in all ranges and registers.

No **rhythmic** errors. Overall, an accurate performance.

Tempo is accurate and consistent with the printed tempo markings.

Tone is full, rich and characteristic of the tone quality of the instrument in all ranges and registers.

An example of a “B” performance:

Intonation is accurate, but student fails to adjust on isolated pitches, yet demonstrates minimal intonation difficulties.

A few wrong **rhythmic** figures. Includes short, continuous sections of rhythmic imprecision.

Tempo approaches the printed tempo markings, yet the performed tempo does not detract significantly from the performance.

Tone is of a characteristic tone quality in most ranges but distorts occasionally in some passages.

An example of a “C” performance:

Intonation is mostly accurate but includes out of tune notes. The student does not adjust problem pitches to an acceptable standard of intonation.

Some wrong **rhythmic** figures. Included short, continuous sections of rhythmic imprecision.

Tempo is different from the printed tempo marking, resulting in inappropriate tempo for the selection, yet remains consistent.

Tone exhibits some flaws in production, i.e., a slightly thin or unfocused sound.

An example of a “D” performance:

Intonation exhibits a basic sense of intonation yet has significant problems. Student makes no apparent attempt at adjustment of problem pitches.

Many wrong **rhythmic** figures that detracted from overall performance. Student was unable to complete the passage.

Tempo is inconsistent, i.e., rushing, dragging, inaccurate tempo changes

Tone has several major flaws in basic production. Consistently thin unfocused sound.

An example of a “F” performance:

Intonation is not accurate. Student’s performance is continuously out of tune.

Significant number of **rhythmic** errors: whole sections incorrectly performed.

Tempo is not accurate or consistent

Tone is not a tone quality characteristic of the instrument.