

Beginning Orchestra Syllabus 2023-2024

Welcome to Beginning Orchestra at HRMS! This is a year-long performance-based class that meets every other day.

Contact Info/ About the Teacher:

Emma Fischer (they/them)

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Hi folks! I am so excited to have you in my Beginning Orchestra class this year. My name is Tr. Fischer (*Tr.* is short for Teacher). You can also call me Mx. Fischer (pronounced "Mix"). This is my second year teaching at Hidden River Middle School. I also teach Band, Percussion, and Music Exploration. I am primarily a pianist and a trumpet player, but I can play every single instrument. Outside of school, I love to rollerblade, play Minecraft and Stardew Valley, walk my dog, and try new restaurants. I can't wait to get to know you!

Class Expectations:

- We work hard, problem solve, and always do our best
- We respect each other and work to make our community safe and inviting for everyone
- We are responsible and take care of the classroom space and materials

Behavior

When students are not meeting behavioral expectations, the following procedures will be followed:

1. Reminder/ warning
2. Reminder/ warning
3. One-on-one conversation
4. Student calls home during class*
5. Teacher calls/emails home**
6. Referral**

**Students may be asked to call their own parent/guardian during class using the classroom phone. The purpose of these phone calls is to require students to take accountability for their behavior and receive parental support in meeting expectations.*

***Home contact and referrals may be used before the other five steps for high-level behavioral concerns, such as fighting and bullying.*

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Supplies and Materials

- 1 inch 3 ring binder
- Lined, 3-hole punched loose leaf paper
- Insertable tab dividers for binders
- Charged iPad
- Pencil with eraser
- Artistry in Strings student Book 1 (*WAIT TO PURCHASE this until your child has selected an instrument and been approved, available at Groth Music and online*)
- Microfiber cloth for instruments (*available online and at most music stores*)
- Damp-it (*wait to purchase, more information provided in “HRMS Strings Instrument Rental and Purchasing Guide”*)
- Optional: personal instrument (*we have instruments available for student use, but many families prefer to purchase or rent their own – more information on this is provided in the “HRMS Strings Instrument Rental and Purchasing Guide”*)

Headphones will be provided by the teacher and can be checked out for student use during class. If the headphones become lost or damaged while checked out, the student will be responsible for replacing them.

If you have concerns about your ability to acquire any of the course materials, please email me at emma.fischer@spps.org. I have limited quantities of extra materials for students who need them.

What Will We Do in This Class?

The first year of string instruction focuses heavily on set-up. By the end of the year, students can expect to have mastery over three central aspects of set-up: body and instrument positioning, right hand set-up, and left-hand set-up. This emphasis on set-up prevents injury and provides a stable foundation for future learning.

While learning a healthy set-up, students will develop their musicianship skills. Students will learn to read music, learn basic music theory, recognize intervals and scales by ear, and hear when they are in and out of tune.

Students who successfully complete Beginning Orchestra will be invited to join Advanced Orchestra next year. Successful completion of Beginning Orchestra includes being able to play D and G Major scales and being able to perform class songs accurately with a good tone. Behavior and effort will also be considered when placing students into Advanced Orchestra.

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Assessments and Grading

Students in Beginning Orchestra will engage in regular formative and summative assessment. Formative assessments are smaller and are worth 30% of each student's grade. Summative assessments are larger and are worth 70% of the final grade.

In this class, students will complete the following formative assessments:

- Monthly playing assessments (must be completed outside of class)
- Monthly Artist Journal checks
- Exit tickets, worksheets, and other small assignments

In this class, students will complete the following summative assessments:

- Concert performances (more information below)

IB teachers assess work using content-specific rubrics to determine students' current **level of achievement** as students demonstrate their abilities. These levels will be reported in Schoology. However, as a school district we still use traditional letter grades. We use the following scale to interpret the IB scores as letter grades:

IB-MYP Grading Scale

IB Achievement Level	8-7 Excellent	6-5 Substantial	4-3 Adequate	2-1 Limited	0
Letter grade	A range	B range	C range	D - N	N
Description of student work	Exceeds standards detailed, thorough, perceptive, effective, and clear	Meets standards considerable, sufficient, and usually/ mostly meets requirements	Reaching standards meets some requirements or meets them sometimes; shows some understanding	Incomplete simple, inconsistent and only begins to or meets few requirements	Below standards/ Missing Student work does not meet any part of the requirements/ standards

Note that achievement at the 5-6 level is considered to be sufficient; students achieving here are meeting class expectations. Achievement at the 7-8 level is difficult, but not impossible. This kind of achievement requires time and energy invested beyond the classroom walls to learn.

Late Work and Resubmissions

HRMS believes that time management is an important skill for students to learn, *and* we understand that many students face challenges that might lead to turning in late work. Achievement levels that students receive (from 0-8) on summative and formative assessments should be a reflection of their knowledge and understanding of the objectives rather than an indication of whether their assignments were submitted on time. No credit will be deducted from late work.

However, students who turn in late work may not receive feedback on formative assessments that will help them improve their achievement. Late work may not be graded as quickly as work submitted on time. Late work will be accepted until 1 calendar week before the final day of the quarter.

Students may resubmit all assignments until 1 calendar week before the final day of each quarter. If students need to retake an exam, they must do so within 1 calendar week of receiving their grade. Exam retakes must be done during Foundations or after school. To schedule an exam retake, students should email Tr. Fischer or tell them in person. Students are not able to redo assessments assigned during the last two calendar weeks of the quarter.

Practice Requirements and Expectations

Just like playing a sport, playing an instrument requires focused and intentional practice to improve. Students must practice outside of class in order to keep up with the pace of instruction.

Beginning Orchestra students are required to practice for a minimum of 10 minutes per day, 5 times per week (not including the time needed to set up and tune). Research suggests that regular, short practice sessions are more effective than irregular, long practice sessions.

Students will not be required to keep a practice log. Instead, students will be held accountable for practice in their Artist Journals and in their monthly playing assessments. Students must practice in order to succeed on their monthly playing assessments. A lack of preparation will result in a poor performance grade. Evidence of practice (as observed by student growth over time) will also be factored into student's summative assessment grades.

Concerts and Performances

Beginning Orchestra students will perform at two mandatory concerts. Concerts are a summative assessment worth 70% of a student's final grade. Missing a concert will result in failing the class. Exceptions will only be made for extenuating circumstances such as severe illness, funerals, and the like.

Winter Concert: Tuesday, December 19th at 6:30PM

Spring Concert: Tuesday, May 7th at 6:30PM

Beginning Orchestra students may choose to attend the Tri-School Orchestra Concert on Wednesday, February 28th at 7PM as audience members. Students who attend will be awarded 2 "points" of extra credit. This is a concert featuring the top orchestras at Hidden River Middle School, Capitol Hill Magnet School, and Central High School.

Concert dress code: students must wear all black, including shoes and socks. Students may choose to wear an optional "pop of blue" to represent Hidden River. Students are asked to dress nicely, as we are representing Hidden River.

Please contact me at emma.fischer@spps.org if your student needs black clothes. Limited black clothing is available.

PLEASE DETACH THIS PAGE AND RETURN IT SIGNED BY FRIDAY, AUGUST 8TH.

By signing, families acknowledge that they have read this syllabus with their student and understand course expectations. Families are also asked to complete the short questionnaire below to help me best support each student's academic and socioemotional success.

If your child is in 2 music classes, you only need to complete and return this form once.

Parent/ Guardian 1 First and Last Name: _____

Parent/ Guardian 2 First and Last Name: _____

How do you prefer to be contacted? Circle all that apply.

Parent/guardian 1: Phone Call Text Email

Parent/guardian 2: Phone Call Text Email

Please provide valid contact information below. Please write legibly and be mindful of capital letters and punctuation.

Parent 1 Phone: _____ Parent 2 Phone: _____

Parent 1 Email: _____ Parent 2 Email: _____

If I need to call, when would you prefer to be contacted? (Leave blank if no preference)

If I have a concern about your child's performance in class (academics or behavior), what do you expect from me as your child's teacher?

What expectations do you have for your child while they are at school?

Student signature _____ **Date** _____

Parent/Guardian 1 Signature _____ **Date** _____

Parent/Guardian 2 Signature _____ **Date** _____