

# SPARTANBURG DISTRICT SIX ELEMENTARY STRINGS

Welcome to the District Six Orchestra Program! This handbook will provide you with information to help your first year string student excel. Please refer to it for questions on grading policies, instrument care, practice suggestions, t-shirt information, and booster club information. You will need to return the last page with signatures to your child's teacher by September 1<sup>st</sup> for M/W classes and September 2<sup>nd</sup> for T/TH classes. If you have not already rented or purchased the following items please do so by September 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup>, depending on your class meeting.

Instrument:	Violin	Viola	Cello	Bass
Book:	<u><i>Essential Elements 2000</i></u>			
Rosin:	for the bow			
Cloth:	to wipe off the strings and instrument after playing			
Pencil:	for each class			
Rock Stop/Cello Strap:	either for cello student's end pins (rock stop for bass)			
Shoulder Rest or sponge:	Violin/viola students will be given a sponge by their teacher before violins/violas go under the chin. A <i>Zaret</i> sponge or <i>Kuhn</i> shoulder rest provide better support and are available from the music store. ( <i>Kuhn</i> shoulder rests will be required in 6 <sup>th</sup> grade. Get the size that will adjust to a larger instrument as your child grows.)			
Music Stand:	for at home practice (stand optional)			

If you have questions about our program, your child's progress, or instrument, please feel free to contact us. You may reach us through your child's elementary school, email, or you may call the orchestra office at Dorman.

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# ORCHESTRA DAILY PRACTICE ROUTINE

*A daily practice routine is more effective than one or two long practices each week.*

Your child will be given practice snakes (records) in class. These records will help your child to know what to practice. Many other factors make up a successful string student. Among these are active participation, good listening skills, and adequate at-home practice. Elementary students are assigned at least 15 minutes of daily practice, a minimum of five days per week. This time is outside of the regular school schedule. The following suggestions will promote good practice habits.

## **1. HELP YOU CHILD TO REMEMBER TO PRACTICE**

Find a specific time and place each day that works for the whole family, (before school, after school, after dinner, etc.) Children need adult reminders to develop good habits.

## **2. SET AN ALARM CLOCK**

Some parents find that setting a timer, facing away from your child, for 15 minutes is helpful. The child should become accustomed to playing at least until the timer goes off. If they choose to exceed the time, be generous with your praise. Some students are actually surprised when the timer goes off!

## **3. SHOW ACTIVE SUPPORT IN YOUR CHILD'S PRACTICE**

- Ask them what they are practicing. A warm-up is usually performed at the beginning of each class (bow exercises, open string bowing, etc.), then we work on specific songs/exercises.
- Children need goals when they practice. As they begin practicing, you can ask to hear something specific, a new song, a scale, or an exercise. Have your child explain the hard places. Musical training or not, your interest is what counts.
- Look at their music with them. The books have some excellent pictures. Have them play their tests for you.

## **4. TAKE YOUR CHILD TO A LIVE CONCERT**

School concerts are excellent choices. Your child will see what they soon will sound like. Look for concert announcements on the practice snakes or in the newspaper. Extra credit can be earned by attending orchestra concerts.

# Elementary Strings Grading Procedure

50% Weekly Participation Grade  
40% Playing Tests and Concerts  
10% Practice Snakes and Written Work

**Participation Grade:** The purpose of the participation grade is to encourage your child to learn responsibility as a member of an orchestra. Being a part of a musical ensemble requires both individual and team responsibilities. Students will begin with 100 participation points each week. Points will be deducted for each occurrence of the following infractions.

- Talking during tuning 10 points
- Disrupting class 5 points
- Improper behavior in the halls 5 points
- Improper nail length 5 points
- Gum 5 points
- Forgotten Music 25 points
- Forgotten Instrument/refusal to play/not coming to class 50 points

Points may be added for the following:

- Memorized solos (teacher approved) 10 points
- Attendance at musical events 10 points  
(Bring a program, signed by a parent to class. Your own elementary school programs are not included.)

**Playing Tests and Concerts:** Students will be asked to individually play a short excerpt out of their book approximately three times each marking period. Grades will also be taken on participation in required rehearsals and concerts. (See mandatory attendance agreement.)

**Practicing:** Students will receive a “*practice snake*” every week. This records how often each student practices individually throughout the week. Please check it carefully. The practice snake holds the same weight as a written test grade and a class rehearsal cannot be counted as practice time. **The recommended practice time for success is 15 minutes - 5 times a week.** The practice snake must be completed at least once during the week to be counted. It should be signed and turned into your strings teacher on the first class of each week. No signature on the practice snake or no practice snake equals a zero. Practice snakes will be accepted for full credit only during the week that it is due. Remember this is 10% of a student’s grade.

*If a student is sick, please note that on the snake and he/she will be excused.*

# How to Care for Your Instrument

*String instruments are delicate and subject to such influences as temperature, humidity, and careless handling. The following are standard guidelines for proper care.*

1. Avoid touching the bow hair or the brown wooden part of the instrument with your hands. The oil from your skin can ruin the bow. If fingerprints get on the wood of the instrument, rub them off with a dry, soft cotton cloth.
2. Protect the instrument from extreme temperature changes. **Do not leave the instrument in the hot sun (such as a parked car).** The varnish will melt and cause irreparable damage. Excessive cold will cause the wood to crack.
3. Close the case on a violin or viola by first placing a cloth over the top of the instrument. Also, make sure that the case is latched before picking-up the case.
4. Keep powdery residue of used rosin wiped clean from the top of the instrument with a soft cloth and be sure the instrument is clean before putting it away.
5. **Always loosen the bow after each use.**
6. Only the string student should handle the instrument and bow. Please do not allow family members play the instrument.
7. **Do not attempt to glue any part of your instrument or attempt any repair.** Always consult your string teacher or a qualified music dealer about repairs.
8. If you follow these recommendations, your instrument can last forever. If you do want to trade-in your instrument for a different size or a better quality model, your trade-in value will be much higher.

## ***Area Music Dealers***

Music and Arts  
1450 W.O. Ezell Boulevard  
Spartanburg, SC 29301  
(864) 595-1116

Bernhardt House of Violins  
10 Howe Street  
Greenville, SC 29601  
(866) 479-8889

Roper Music  
753 East Main Street Suite 1  
Spartanburg, SC 29302  
(864) 542-2263

Musical Innovations  
150-G Tanner Road at Butler  
Greenville, SC 29607  
(864) 286-8742

# Expectations for Orchestra Students

## Teacher/Classroom Rules:

1. Cooperate with your teacher and classmates.
2. Respect the rights and property of others.
3. Bring all required equipment and supplies to every class.
4. Follow school rules and policies as outlined in the District Discipline Code.

## Consequences will be chosen from the following:

1. Verbal warnings and/or parent contact.
2. Loss of recess and/or teacher detentions.
3. Referral to administration. Possible recommendation for removal from Honor Roll.

## Concerts and Special Rehearsals:

- **Students are expected to attend all dress rehearsals and required concerts.** In addition to being a part of your child's grade, the orchestra is like a team and cannot perform effectively with members missing. It is vitally important to the orchestra that every member assumes his/her responsibilities. The following is expected:
  - All schools will have their own required concert in March or April. Your orchestra teacher will inform you of the concert date and time. The District Six String Fling will take place Thursday, March 11, 2011 at 7:00 p.m. in the Dorman Arena. The rehearsal for this concert will be Thursday, March 3, 2011 from 4-5 p.m. in the DHS Orchestra Room. The String Fling rehearsal and concert are required events. Unavoidable conflicts should be cleared IN ADVANCE of the event.
  - Students, who are absent from a required event, with prior approval from the director or in accordance with the absence policy stated on the form below, will receive an alternative assignment. Unexcused absences will not be made up.
- The first opportunity for the 5<sup>th</sup> grade to perform, will be a voluntary **concert on Friday, October 1<sup>st</sup>**. The "Masquerade Ball" will take place in the Dorman Arena at 7:00 p.m. This voluntary concert will include 5<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grades. This is not a required concert for the 5<sup>th</sup> grade, but we encourage them to participate.

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Please cut along dotted line and return the lower portion to your orchestra teacher. Keep the information above for your records.

## Handbook Agreement Form

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Name

We have read and agree to follow the guidelines as described in the orchestra handbook. We understand that our child, as a member of the Spartanburg District Six Orchestra Program, is required to attend all performances and dress rehearsals. Attendance is mandatory except in circumstances of emergency, sickness or prior arrangement with the director. Unexcused absences may result in a failing grade for that particular concert, seriously jeopardizing a passing grade in orchestra.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Signature