



**2020-2021**  
**OSLO & STORM GROVE MIDDLE SCHOOLS**  
**ORCHESTRA HANDBOOK SIGNATURE PAGE**

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Student ID: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's primary or cell phone \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent email (print legibly, please): \_\_\_\_\_

What is the best way to contact you? \_\_\_\_\_

**PLEASE PRINT CAREFULLY**

Parent/Guardian email address \_\_\_\_\_

Student email address \_\_\_\_\_


**To the parents, guardians and music students at OMS/SGMS;**

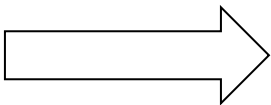
The Digital Copy of the Oslo & Storm Grove Middle School Orchestra Handbook is available online at [www.gotstrings.org](http://www.gotstrings.org) or by requesting in writing (email or letter) a printed copy.

Parents/Guardians and students are ***required to sign and return this page***. Please understand ***how very*** important it is to be aware of all the expectations and requirements as a member of the orchestra program, so your child may have an enjoyable, enriching, and successful experience in music.

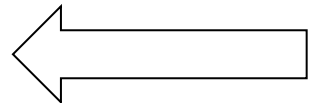
**These signatures verify that the parent or guardian and student have read the Orchestra handbook and understand their responsibilities in being a valued member of the OMS/SGMS Orchestras.**

 **REQUIRED:** Student's signature \_\_\_\_\_

 **REQUIRED:** Parent or Guardian's signature \_\_\_\_\_



**PLEASE RETURN BY FRIDAY, AUGUST 28, 2020**



Richard Ballinger, Orchestra Director  
772-564-3952      richard.ballinger@indianriverschools.org

**2020-2021**  
**OSLO & STORM GROVE MIDDLE SCHOOLS**  
**ORCHESTRA HANDBOOK**

\òr-kes-trə\ a group of musicians including or especially string players organized to perform ensemble music

**Dear Students and Parents,**

Welcome to the 2020/2021 Oslo & Storm Grove Middle School Orchestra! I am so excited to have the privilege of working with you to make great music and reach for excellence, individually, and as an Orchestra family. To reach these goals, it is essential for us all to work together:

- As the teacher, I must facilitate learning by providing sound instruction, demonstration, and assistance.
- Students must practice the skills learned in class through repetition as well as creative practicing.
- And finally, parents must not forget how vital a role they play as they encourage their children to practice, commend them for their progress, and promote a positive creative learning environment that will lead to success.

We will work together to promote the qualities needed to fulfill our Orchestra motto: Together Everyone Achieves More. Everyone in the organization has abilities and potential, but the sum of the whole is greater than the individual, as in many things. Each member of our Orchestra family contributes by having integrity, a positive attitude, and always reaching for their best as well as bringing out the best in those around them.

Please take special note of the Orchestra Parent Meeting scheduled for **Thursday, September 10 at 7:00 PM – Virtual Meeting on Zoom.** Attendance by at least one parent or guardian please. This serves many purposes including being the business meeting for our Orchestra Booster (OPUS), facilitating all forms and information to be submitted, and handling important financial items for the year.

After going through this packet with your child, please fill out the information and signature page and submit on Canvas. If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to contact me by email or phone. Thanks again, and I look forward to a tremendous year!  
Musically Yours,

**Richard Ballinger**  
**OMS & SGMS Orchestra Director**  
**Phone: 564-3952 Email: [richard.ballinger@indianriverschools.org](mailto:richard.ballinger@indianriverschools.org)**

**YOU are responsible for YOU!**

**Think ahead and MAKE A GOOD CHOICE!**

## **C.O.R.E. Orchestra**

We are very fortunate in Indian River County to have strong and excellent music programs from the elementary level through high school. It is required that **each student remain in their chosen music group for the entire school year once it has begun**. Stay in music and experience all of the wonderful things that come from being a musician through dedication, commitment and responsibility! These qualities are reflected in Civility, Order, Respect, and Excellence which we will focus on throughout the year.

### **KEYS TO SUCCESS:**

**1. Come to class everyday with your instrument, music, and supplies (ORDER, RESPECT)**

This is the most fundamental yet essential key to success. It is very important that you are in class **on time** with your instrument, music, and supplies every day. It is also important that your **body and mind be present in class every day**. Wasted time equals a lack of productivity and added frustration. Don't let anything or **anyone** distract you from being your best in music class.

**2. Participate daily (RESPECT, EXCELLENCE)**

Participation in class activities is another important key to success. Participation in the group builds confidence and we will develop and grow as a team. You are a member of your chosen music team. There are no "benches" in music for those not performing well. Therefore, it is critical that we all participate together to make our team look and sound its best. **Participation will be graded!**

**3. Practice on your own (ORDER, EXCELLENCE)**

The only way to improve as a musician and make a contribution to the orchestra is to practice at home. LeBron James became a great basketball player by **practicing**, not sitting around wishing that his skills would improve. He did not just practice with the team. He had to work at it **every day** so that his talent could be perfected. Some things in orchestra may not come naturally at first; that is okay, and the more time you have the instrument in your hands, the more natural it will feel. You have to work at playing every day so that you can continue to improve. Wishing to improve with no practice is not going to help you develop. It is going to take some work on your part. **Be responsible to your team and practice at home!**

**4. Take private lessons (EXCELLENCE)**

The most successful musicians take private lessons. Private lessons help students to build upon what they have already learned in their school music program. Private and corporate studios offer lessons to students throughout the Indianapolis area. If you feel like you are struggling in class, lessons can help you catch up on material with a one-on-one tutor! If class is going easily for you, lessons will give you fun and exciting new things to do! If you're right on track, you'll still gain so much! **Please contact your child's music teacher for further information. This is an opportunity that CAN happen virtually!**

**5. Listen to other groups perform (CIVILITY, RESPECT, EXCELLENCE)**

We are fortunate to have some local performing ensembles that will play live once circumstances allow. The Vero Beach Chamber Orchestra, the Brevard Symphony, Atlantic Classical Orchestra, as well as Vero Beach High School Orchestra, and IRCHS Orchestra to name a few. Listening to fine musicians and ensembles, even online, gives us a better idea of what we should sound like and how we should perform.

# **ORCHESTRA CORE CLASSROOM PROCEDURES**

Classroom procedures will produce a more structured CORE classroom, which in turn will produce more productive learning time.

## **Upon arrival to music class, every student will:**

1. Enter the music room in a respectful manner. (RESPECT, ORDER)
2. Enter the classroom with your mask on, and do not remove it in the classroom. (RESPECT, CIVILITY)
3. Look on the whiteboard, and then prepare for class by immediately getting all supplies out, preparing music, sharpening your pencil, and readying your instrument. (ORDER)
4. Spit out any gum, candy or other items in the mouth. (ORDER, RESPECT)
5. Sit in your **assigned** seat and prepare for that day's lesson on the music stand. (ORDER)
6. Prepare for tuning and wait for further instructions. (ORDER, RESPECT)
7. While tuning, students will be quiet and attentive to the process. (RESPECT)
8. No talking or practicing your instrument when tuning as a class. (CIVILITY, RESPECT)
9. No talking or distracting other students during instruction. (CIVILITY, RESPECT)
10. Place your practice card in the practice card box every Thursday or Friday as you enter. (ORDER)
11. Treat everyone in class with respect at all times. (RESPECT, CIVILITY)
12. Write your goals in your practice log and use at home and at school during practice time for mastery. (EXCELLENCE)

**Social Distancing: Seats will be arranged as close to the recommended 6ft. spacing. Chairs must stay where they are, and you must sit in your assigned seat.**

**Tardy to class:** Students are to be in their music room when the bell rings. Students will then have three minutes to be in their seats with their instrument and supplies, ready to begin class. (ORDER)

**Asking for help:** Students should raise their hands and wait quietly for assistance. Do not approach the teacher directly, or approach him during class exchange, except in an emergency. Do not talk out during class instruction unless called upon. Do not get out of your seat without permission. (CIVILITY, RESPECT)

**Trash:** Students should place trash below their chair and wait until dismissal to dispose of waste.

**Restroom/Nurse pass:** Students should plan ahead and use the restroom before/after class.

**Restroom/Nurse EMERGENCY:** Must ask respectfully! (RESPECT)

**Tissues:** Student will raise their hand and wait for permission to get a tissue if they are available. Donations of tissues to music classes are greatly appreciated! (RESPECT, CIVILITY)

**Food/Drinks/Gum/Candy:** Only treats/snacks given by the teacher may be eaten in the classroom. Clear, reusable water bottles (full of water only) will be allowed this year due to the lack of water fountains. Spills must be cleaned immediately, and students must drink with masks still on. **GUM IS NOT ALLOWED.** (RESPECT)

**Dismissal from class:** The teacher will dismiss students to put away their instruments and prepare to leave approximately three minutes before the dismissal bell. After instruments are put away, students should be seated, and wait for the teacher to dismiss the class. (ORDER, EXCELLENCE)

**THE BELL DOES NOT DISMISS STUDENTS.**

# Classroom Expectations and Discipline Plan

Success in the orchestra program depends heavily on self-discipline. The classroom discipline plan enables every student the opportunity to manage his/her behavior. Your child deserves the most positive educational environment possible for learning, as well as having the privilege and responsibility of representing our Orchestra Program, Oslo & Storm Grove Middle School, and our community.

## Respectful

- Be Considerate to Others
- Take care of your instrument
- Raise your hand to be called on

## Responsible

- Be seated on time, ready to play with instrument, music, and pencil.
- Keep the aisles clear and store your instrument in your assigned location.
- Listen and follow all instructions

## Role-Model

- Always practice good musicianship in all aspects of orchestra including posture, attentiveness, and performance
- Silently practice when your section is not playing
- Stay focused and always give your best effort, 110&!

Behavior Concerns: (According to School Policy) (excessive disruption, food, gum, drink, forgetting materials, general insubordination, etc.) will result in the following:

**1<sup>st</sup> Offense:** Verbal Warning, documentation

**2<sup>nd</sup> Offense:** Parent Contact, intervention (detention, writing assignment, etc.), documentation

**3<sup>rd</sup> Offense:** Office Referral (defiance, other)

**Gum, dress code, defiance, and/or other major incidents will result in immediate office referral.**

**INSTRUMENT PURCHASES:** Students are encouraged to purchase their own instrument eventually. Students may rent a school-owned violin/viola for \$100 or cello/bass for \$150 each school year. (See below for more details). Students on Free or Reduced lunch may apply for financial assistance.

**For students purchasing instruments:** Please do not purchase instruments online or at department stores that are cheap and do not function properly. This can be difficult to diagnose; most often, students find themselves with ISOs (Instrument-Shaped-Objects). ISOs will frequently need repair, are not covered by warranty, will not play in tune, will be difficult to play and will have a poor sound. **Your instrument needs “ebony fittings”. This means that the instrument has pegs, fingerboard, and a tailpiece made of the wood “ebony”.** I highly recommend contacting Muni Strings in north Orlando or Atlantic Strings in Melbourne for a high quality instrument. There are some instruments available at Dominant Music in Vero Beach, but please only purchase higher quality instruments (not the ISO’s!!!).

**SCHOOL INSTRUMENT RENTALS:** OPUS owns a limited selection of instruments available for rent.

**Cellos and String Bases** are available to all students for rent at school. Based upon availability, students will be assigned a “stay at home” cello or bass in addition to a cello or bass at school. (Instrument WILL need to be returned to school periodically for tuning). Cellos and basses must **NEVER** be transported by school busses! Cello and Bass players will also be required to purchase a rock stop for at home and at school. Buy one and transport to and from school, or you can buy two and leave one at school. The cost is \$17.00 for each Dycem Black Hole Rock Stop.

Bass and Cello students not requiring financial assistance should rent-to-own from Muni Strings, Atlantic Strings, or another **QUALITY** source. If buying from anywhere but Muni Strings or Atlantic Strings, please contact the director and secure approval for the instrument. **Check out prices online at [www.munistrings.com](http://www.munistrings.com) or [www.atlanticstrings.com](http://www.atlanticstrings.com).**

All students using a school-owned instrument will be charged to rent the instrument for one school year and must sign and return the Instrument Loan Agreement. Required Starter pack (rosin, shoulder rest/rock stop, cleaning cloth) are included in the Orchestra Lab Fee. Students are responsible for the care and maintenance of the instrument assigned to them. Any damage to the instrument due to negligence or carelessness will be the financial responsibility of the student and the parent/guardian to replace.



**REQUIRED MEETING FOR ALL ORCHESTRA STUDENTS AND PARENTS:**

Please visit Mr. Ballinger virtually or in-person at your designated Back-to-School night, depending on the format being followed by the school. This is so I can get you the information you need for a successful start to this school year. This includes families who have opted for the virtual option this semester!

**Instruments will need to be “in hand” or rental paid by Friday, September 11<sup>th</sup> to begin at home practice.**

**Digital Citizenship:** As you may be aware, the structure of this school year depends heavily on the state of positive COVID-19 cases in the Indian River County population. As such, our Canvas courses will be utilized not only while students are at home, but in class as well to maintain as consistent of an experience as possible. Much of our time at the start of the school year will not only be spent picking our instruments, learning how to hold them correctly, and learning the building blocks of music. We will also focus time on learning how to utilize Canvas, and how to be successful within Canvas.

Digital Citizenship is the expectation that the student makes his or her best effort to participate in virtual activities and assignments. This means:

- Students will be expected to turn in digital assignments via the instructions given. Every assignment format will be reviewed and practiced in class at the start of the school year, and review will be given if any new/infrequent assignment formats are used. **Long story short: Always follow the instructions to Canvas assignments.**
- Student attendance and engagement in synchronous instruction (Zoom calls, Flipgrid assignments, activities given during virtual time in the school day) will be treated the same as in-class participation. If a student is having difficulty connecting from home, please communicate with the teacher as soon as possible, so we can figure out a solution without penalizing the student for something out of their control. **Long story short: Be on time to video calls, and participate so that you can receive points.**
- For Zoom calls and any other video program that allows, students are encouraged to use school-appropriate, non-distracting backgrounds for privacy reasons. Students must also abide by school dress code while on video. **Long story short: Wear a shirt and be aware of your surroundings!**
- When in the classroom or doing synchronous instruction, students must be on task. It is very easy to open a new tab on your chromebook and lose focus. The district is using LanSchool and will have access to view your screen from my own at all times when working on school assignments. **Long story short: Don't be on other websites when I need your attention.**
- Students must show CORE during virtual instruction. Virtual instruction is also not the time to misuse video/audio technology. **Long Story Short: Don't be a distraction in class or online.**
- One of the biggest challenges this year will be ensuring that instruments are able to be tuned from home. This is especially big for Cello/Bass players, who will have a separate instrument for home use. Every class will be instructed on tuning procedures and resources that they will learn how to use from day one. Students must let the teacher know if any repairs or tuning is necessary, and parents/guardians may need to bring the instrument to school for necessary repairs. **Long Story Short: Be especially mindful of your instrument if you are at home.**
- Although social networks can be a very useful tool for communication, they can sometimes cast a negative and often inaccurate light on individuals and organizations. Orchestra students are expected to refrain from posting any information on "Facebook", "Instagram", or any similar sites or blogs that may cast discredit on the Orchestra or its members. Infractions may result in administrative disciplinary consequences. **Long Story Short: Think carefully of the potential consequences before posting anything on social media.**

I promise as the teacher to show grace and patience as we learn a whole new way to function as a class. I ask that you show the same patience, grace, and willingness to try new things as we navigate this next school year.

**UNIFORMS:** All orchestra members are required to wear the orchestra uniform for all performances, pictures, and specially designated events. Due to the nature of this year, these concerts may not follow their usual format. In the event that traditional concerts cannot be held, our uniform will be assigned later in the year for advanced/chamber students. Other uniform requirements will be modified as required.

The full uniform, if assigned is as follows:

\*Assigned Orchestra Dress or Shirt/Tie/Vest.

\*Solid Black Pants for gentlemen

\*Black **Dress** Shoes (with matching socks) **OR, nice** flats for females. Black Ugg boots are acceptable. Heels and toes must be covered (No sandals).

\*No large jewelry, chokers, bracelets, hair pieces, etc.

\*Proper hygiene and trimmed nails. No long or press on nails (this is a daily uniform requirement as well).

Students who are not in proper uniform for the performance will not be allowed to perform, thus counting as an unexcused absence.

Finances: If any family is having difficulty with these fees, or acquiring the uniform attire, please contact Mr. Ballinger.

**REQUIRED SUPPLIES:** All students are required to have their instrument, accessories, a pencil, and a music binder, clear plastic sleeves along with their textbook and other sheet music. This is a **daily** requirement, and bringing these items to class/having these items on hand at home is part of the daily performance grade. It is recommended to use a pencil pouch to hold the smaller items in one case; this can be attached to the instrument case and prevent items from getting lost. These items should all be visible in the classroom/shown via video assignment by Monday/Tuesday August 24/25th..

**PROBATION:** Any student who is not meeting the standards of their orchestra will receive a probationary contract with written comments on areas of needing improvement. The student will be expelled from the music program at the end of the school year if improvement has not been attempted/made.

**CHEWING GUM:** Chewing gum is not allowed in the classroom. Failure to throw away gum properly may result in disciplinary action.

**FINGERNAIL LENGTH:** Fingernail length **cannot** extend past the end of the finger. The end of the finger **must** be in contact with the fingerboard for the fingers to move properly and to produce the correct sounds. Long or Press on nails also create a hazard to the instrument as well as possible injury from incorrect posture. Students who choose to wear artificial nails or have long fingernails will have 5% of their grade deducted daily until the fingernails are appropriate length for playing their stringed instrument. If a student's fingernails continue to be too long one week before a concert, including the day of the concert, the student will not be allowed to perform with the orchestra and this will result in an unexcused absence.

**CARE OF SCHOOL PROPERTY:** Every student is responsible for the care of music department property. Defacing, theft, or destruction will become the responsibility of the child and/or parent or guardian to properly clean, repair, or replace the items affected. This includes writing on school-owned music stands!

**PRACTICE JOURNALS:** Practicing at home is a class requirement, not an option. We have a special system for tracking practice, called our Practice Journal. Goals worked on/achieved during at-home practice will be graded, not time spent on instruments at home. Students must be able to set/reach achievable goals every week, and practice of at least 20 minutes per day is a good **low** estimate.

Both Parent and student should submit this journal entry, and the student will submit it to the orchestra teacher on Thursday or Friday of each week. Students who fail to turn in practice journal will receive a grade of "C" or **less** depending on their current class performance for that grading period. The first practice journal is due on Thursday, September 3, 2020. The Practice Journal will be available on CANVAS.





**GRADING SYSTEM:** *Quarterly Grades will be determined from the following criteria:*

<b>Public Performance/Events – practical application (Live and Video Performance, not test related)</b>	<b>30%</b>
<b>Playing Exams – learned skills, accurate application (Playing Test, Progress Checks)</b>	<b>25%</b>
<b>Rehearsal Performance – laboratory activities (Practice Journals, SRF, Rehearsals)</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>Class Performance – attendance, preparation, execution, progress</b>	<b>15%</b>
<b>Written Work– knowledge, learned skills (theory, composition, history)</b>	<b>10%</b>

Grade weighting is subject to change after grading periods finish.

**UNEXCUSED ABSENCE FROM A CONCERT = NO CREDIT GIVEN.** At the discretion of the director, a make up assignment may be assigned for partial credit (50%) for an unexcused absence or full credit (100%) for an excused absence.

**REHEARSALS AND PERFORMANCE GUIDELINES:** Orchestra is a performance-based class, and most of what we do culminates in public performance. As a member of the OMS/SGMS Orchestra, each student plays a key role in the success of the organization. Students must attend every rehearsal and performance. This includes attendance at orchestra concerts, organizational events and MPA's. An absence from a rehearsal or performance may be excused due to an extreme emergency (i.e. death of a family member or personal illness, **which results in an absence from school**). Unexcused absences include but are not limited to lack of transportation to the performance, non-school related extracurricular activities, family gatherings, birthday parties, etc. Each quarter starts fresh with practice cards, behaviors and attendance. **As a performance class, events *outside* of the normal school day are required and graded according to the Orchestra Grading Policies.**

**ABSENCE FROM REHEARSAL OR CONCERT:** If a student misses a rehearsal or concert for any reason, **it is the responsibility of the parent** to contact Mr. Ballinger by written notice **within 48 hours**. It is then the decision of the director whether the absence is excused or unexcused. Failure to provide written notification within 48 hours will render the student's absence unexcused. **All unexcused absences will result in a reduction of the student's music grade.**

**MUSIC DEPARTMENT CALENDAR:** Attendance at all performances is mandatory. Every performance is a team effort. Parental support is needed to insure our children's success, the success of the performance and to teach our children the value of commitment, personal responsibility, and teamwork. It is the responsibility of the student and parents to mark these dates in their calendars and make them a priority to avoid potential conflicts. Our event calendar this year will be ready on shorter notice this year, and will be subject to cancellation. All dates will be given out at least **nine weeks prior**.

**Concert Seating:** A student's seat for performance or rehearsal can become a source of debate, however, all must realize that orchestra is a unified, team effort, and each student, no matter where they sit, is important. While we may have auditions for certain seats or privileges, the final decision is left up to the director in the best interests of the orchestra.

**Financial Obligations:** Each year, the orchestra spends several hundred dollars per student that is not currently funded by the school system. The vast majority of the budget income is in the form of fundraising and donations. Expenses include uniform purchases and maintenance, transportation, FOA fees, maintenance of equipment and new equipment. From time to time, parents are asked to contribute to cover these costs. **If students are unable to meet these financial obligations, please contact your director in advance to discuss options such as fundraising events to assist in covering these expenses. Please note that monies contributed to the orchestra are donations and are not refundable, i.e.**

\*\*\* Students who have not met financial obligations will not be allowed to participate in the Spring Trip, the Spring Awards Banquet, or other events at the Director's discretion.

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**ORCHESTRA CONFLICTS WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS:** The goal of OMS/SGMS is to give each student an opportunity to participate in multiple school activities. However, there are times when sports, academic extracurricular activities, and music activities may conflict with one another. The music director and the coaches have established a working partnership to make sure that the students have an opportunity to participate in non-music activities and fulfill their requirements for the orchestra at the same time. The following policy has been established between the coaches and the Music Department:

- Concerts take precedence over practices.
- Competition takes precedence over music rehearsals.
- When rehearsal and practice occurs on the same day, the student notifies the coach and Mr. Ballinger of this conflict and will work with both to create a compromise.
- If a concert and a non-music contest occur on the same night, the student will make every effort to make it to both events. If this is not possible, both coach and music teacher must be contacted in advance so the coach and teacher can decide where the student should attend without penalty.
- Failure to attend rehearsal or concert due to a non-music conflict will result in an unexcused absence if the music teacher was not notified in advance.

**FUNDRAISERS:** Music programs depend on funding from the state and the school districts. Unfortunately, this funding is not enough to support a superior music program. Therefore, students in the Music Department are encouraged to participate in the Music Department Fundraiser(s) so we can provide students with the music, classroom supplies and equipment needed for the best musical experience. A donation to the orchestra, given to the music teacher, is appreciated if not participating in the fundraisers. Make checks payable to OPUS.

## Class Descriptions

**Beginning Orchestra** – No prior experience required. Students will learn the basic fundamentals of string instrument performance and music theory on the violin, viola, cello, or string bass. Two performances per year and two to three rehearsals outside of school day are required. Students may use a school instrument (contribution requested) and will purchase their own concert uniform (white polo shirt, black pants). Students playing the violin or viola must purchase a quality shoulder rest.  
Private Lessons are recommended.

**Symphony/Advanced Orchestra** – Prior experience recommended, teacher approval to become a member. Students will continue to develop the fundamentals of string instrument performance and music theory on the violin, viola, cello, or string bass. 3 performances and all related rehearsals and participation in other events outside the school day are required. Students may use a school instrument (contribution requested) and will be assigned a formal concert uniform (contribution requested). All students are required to have proper equipment for their instrument.  
Private lessons are recommended when possible.

**Chamber Orchestra** – Application/Audition and Teacher Approval is required. Students are also **required** to be members of the Symphony or Advanced Orchestra to be in the Chamber Orchestra. This class is the highest level of musicianship in the Orchestra program and students must be able to work well with others, be self-motivated, and dedicated to representing their orchestra, school, and community. Classes will explore higher levels of chamber music and learning how to individually contribute to the success of the orchestra through community goals, peer teaching, and self-direction. In addition to the requirements of the Symphony/Advanced Orchestra, additional performances, rehearsals, and events that may be required. **Though private lessons are not required, they are highly recommended.**



**for your support of your child in their school music program!**