

# **RIVER BEND MIDDLE SCHOOL ORCHESTRA HANDBOOK 2023-2024**

**Ms. Buchko, Orchestra Director**

**Email: [lara.buchko@lcps.org](mailto:lara.buchko@lcps.org)**

**[Orchestra Website](#)**



**River Bend Middle School  
46240 Algonkian Pkwy  
Sterling, VA 20165  
(571) 434-3220**

# COMMUNICATION

## ORCHESTRA WEBSITE

The RBMS orchestra website is a great place to find general information regarding our program. The orchestra website is updated on a continual basis to reflect the most current information. **Please visit our website [here](#) for more information and bookmark our page!**

## SCHOOLGY

Schoology will house copies of all class resources as well as course information, assignments, and events. Parents can join the specific Schoology for each class to keep up to date on assignments and upcoming events.

## PARENTVUE / STUDENTVUE

ParentVUE / StudentVUE provides access to student schedules, assignments, grades, notes, 24/7.

## INSTAGRAM

Instagram will be used to celebrate achievements and showcase our orchestra students. Instagram is a wonderful social media site to engage our students, parents, and community with our school orchestra. Follow **@RBMS Orchestra**.

## EMAIL and PHONE

E-mail will be the main channel for communication. Phone calls will be made if disciplinary action occurs, praise is warranted, and/or any request on the parent's behalf to speak via phone. Please call the main RBMS phone (571) 434-3220 to be directed to my voicemail.

Please feel free to contact me! The best way to reach me is by email.  
I will do my best to respond within 24 hours **(work weekdays)**.



# ENSEMBLES

**Strings 6** – Beginning Orchestra: Strings 6 is a curricular ensemble. Most of our meetings occur during the regular school day, and students receive a grade. Strings 6 is open to all 6<sup>th</sup> grade River Bend Middle School students, regardless of prior experience in music.

**Strings 7** – Intermediate Orchestra: Strings 7 is a curricular ensemble. Like beginning strings, most of our meetings occur during the regular school day, and students receive a grade. Strings 7 students have a few additional after school rehearsals and performances. Strings 7 is open to all 7<sup>th</sup> grade students who have at least one year of string playing experience.

**Strings 8** – Advanced Orchestra: Strings 8 is a curricular ensemble. Advanced Orchestra students receive a grade and meet during the school day. There are several after school events for Advanced Orchestra students, including field trips to assessment and King’s Dominion (please see the field trip section of the handbook for more information). The Advanced Orchestra is open to River Bend Middle School students in 8<sup>th</sup> grade who have at least 2 years of string playing experience or students who pass an audition.

**Pop Strings** - Pop Strings is an extracurricular ensemble. Pop Strings is open to string students in 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade, 6<sup>th</sup> Grade string students by audition only. Students must be enrolled in an orchestra class at RBMS to participate in Pop Strings. Pop Strings meets weekly before school. Students in Pop Strings are expected to uphold high performance standards by demonstrating superior rehearsal techniques and practicing their music outside of rehearsals. Pop Strings has several concerts and performances.

## VBODA DISTRICT 16 OPPORTUNITIES

*(Virginia Music Educators Association > Virginia Band & Orchestra Association)*

**Junior Regional Orchestra:** Junior Regional Orchestra is open to 7<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> grade students by a highly competitive audition. Students must be in good standing in orchestra to audition. The audition consists of major scales, a prepared etude, and sight-reading. Auditions for Junior Regional Orchestra occur in September. Junior Regional Orchestra event occurs in the Fall.

**All-County Orchestra:** All-County Orchestra is open to 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade students by audition. Students must be in good standing in orchestra to audition. The audition consists of major scales, a prepared etude, and sight-reading. Auditions for All – County Orchestra occur in January. All- County Orchestra occurs in the Spring.

**Solo & Ensemble Festival:** Solo & Ensemble festival is open to 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade students. Students must be in good standing in music class to participate in the festival. For the festival, students prepare a solo or small ensemble piece and perform for judges.

# REQUIRED CLASS SUPPLIES

- **Instrument:** Instrument, Bow, Case (correctly sized) \*
- **Instrument Accessories:**
  1. Case Tag (must have name and contact information always on case)
  2. Soft Cloth for Cleaning
  3. Rosin
  4. Violin / Viola: Shoulder Rest (correctly sized)
  5. Cello / Bass: Rock stop
- **Method Books:** *Method Books will be purchased by LCPS (NEW 2023-2024)*
  - **6<sup>th</sup> Grade:** *Essential Elements for Strings Book 1*
  - **7<sup>th</sup> Grade:** *Essential Elements for Strings Book 1*
  - **8<sup>th</sup> Grade:** *Essential Elements for Strings Book 2*
- **Black 3-Ring Binder** (used for orchestra music)
- **Clear Sheet Protectors and Pencil**
- **Extra Set of Strings:** (one set of extra strings is always helpful to have on hand)
- **Music Stand for Home Practice**
- **Metronome & Tuner** (FREE apps on phones)

## Fingernail Policy

One sacrifice we make to play our instrument correctly is having short nails. **Are they too long?** Test: with a straight finger, firmly press the fingertip down onto the top of a table so that the finger is perpendicular to the table. If the fingertip can firmly press down, without the nail getting in the way, the nail is short enough. If the nail gets in the way, nails are too long to play a string instrument.

# REQUIRED CONCERT ATTIRE

## Strings 6

- River Bend Music T-Shirt (provided)
- Plain **Black** pants and/or Black long skirt
- Plain **Black** Shoes & Socks

## Strings 7

- River Bend Music T-Shirt (from Strings 6)
- Plain **Black** pants and/or Black long skirt
- Plain **Black** Shoes & Socks

## Strings 8

- Plain **Black** Dress Shirt
- Plain **Black** Dress Pants and/or Long Skirt
- Plain **Black** Long Dress
- Plain **Black** Socks and Shoes
- No sandals, colored sneakers, flip-flops, white socks, any other color than black.



# CONCERT & REHEARSAL POLICY

**Orchestra is a performance-based course.** Therefore, students are **REQUIRED** to attend all rehearsals and performances listed on the Calendar of Events. Students will receive a grade based upon attendance at these events. It is expected students stay for the entirety of the concert to receive full credit.

All absences require e-mail communication between the parent and director. Verbal and written excuses from the student are not acceptable. When requesting an excused absence, the director must be notified at least a month in advance.

**Excused Absences** from rehearsals and/or performances are accepted for the following reasons:

- Medical Emergency
- Death in the Family
- Religious Holidays
- One time family event such as a wedding (must be approved, in advance, by the director)

**Unexcused Absences** are from rehearsals and/or performances (examples):

- Failure to previously arrange an absence with parent/teacher notification
- Failure to resolve a non-curricular activity that meets outside of the school day (e.g. club and travel sports teams)
- Failure to arrange transportation
- Vacations (not discussed at the beginning of the year)
- No Show

## **MAKE-UP POLICY FOR UNEXCUSED ABSENCES FOR REHEARSAL(S) & PERFORMANCE(S)**

In the event a student should have an unexcused absence for a performance and/or rehearsal, the student will be required to do the following by the concert date:

- Submit a video recording performing all concert music independently in concert uniform.
- Students will be graded on their performance based on the [VBODA Concert Performance Assessment Rubric](#).
- The highest possible grade for the missed concert and/or rehearsal will be 80% (B-) of the total points allotted.

## **CHAIR SEATING**

Students will be arranged in various ways for class / concerts and will be at the discretion of the Orchestra Director. Any student not in the required concert attire may have points being deducted from their final grade.

# GRADING

Category	Description
Major Summative (75-100 PTS)	<p><b>A. <u>Concert Participation</u></b> It is vital to the success of the orchestra that every student attend orchestra concerts. Performances not only showcase individual talents of students but also create a sense of community among performers.</p> <p><b>B. <u>Rehearsal Participation</u></b> Before School rehearsals prepare students for concerts, as they can rehearse as a full orchestra with all students across their grade level. Dates are listed on the calendar of events.</p> <p><b>C. <u>Assessments</u></b> Playing / Written Tests will be given throughout the school year. Playing tests and Quizzes will include pieces/ or exercises that are being studied in class.</p>
Minor Summative (20-50 PTS)	<p>Minor Summative may range from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Music Theory and History Worksheets</li> <li>• General Assignments</li> </ul>
Daily Practice	Daily practice is expected and essential for students to succeed on their instrument.
Late Summative(s)	<p>If the summative is 10 school days late, the highest possible grade will be 80% of the total points allotted.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>(Excluding concerts and rehearsals – see page 5 for more details)</i></li> </ul>
Grade Revision Policy	Only playing tests and written assessments shall be eligible for revision. All revision tests will need to be scheduled with Ms. Buchko within 10 school days of the initial assessment. If the student has not made-up a missed assessment, the student will receive a 0.

***\*\*Please note: Extra Credit will not be offered for Music & Art Classes at RBMS\*\****

# CLASSROOM POLICIES

## CLASSROOM RULES

1. Show respect to everything and everyone!
2. Only water is permitted. (no gum, candy, food, colored drinks)
3. Tech is not needed unless specified. (no air pods, phones, watches, etc.)

## STUDENT EXPECTATIONS

1. Students will not talk while the teacher is speaking and be attentive throughout class.
2. Students will have their instrument, music, and supplies, for every class.
3. Violins / Violas will be placed in lockers except when used for class.
4. Violins / Violas are expected to go home after each class day so students may practice.
5. String players should have short fingernails to learn proper playing technique.
  - a. *Music Standards of Learning: MIB.15, MII.14, and MIAD.14*
6. Have a positive attitude!

## POOR CHOICE INTERVENTIONS

Classroom rules and student expectations are important for students to succeed on their instrument and have an enjoyable class experience. Therefore, we must make the effort to take our classes seriously and set goals with high expectations.

If you choose to disregard the classroom rules and/or expectations some and/or all of these interventions will follow: **seat change, teacher conversation, pack-up instrument for day, phone call home, parent conference, referral to administrator, detention, ineligible for field trips, and/or removal from the orchestra community.**

## SCHOOL-OWNED CELLOS AND BASSES

Bass and Cello students are expected to maintain good condition of these school-owned instruments and will accept responsibility for all damages other than normal use. The director will determine all fines based upon repair appraisals. **Cello and bass students must have an instrument that stays at home for home practice. All cello and bass students must bring their personal instruments from home for all concerts and combined rehearsals.**

## INSTRUMENT STORAGE/LOCKERS

All violin/viola students will be issued a locker, which they may share with other students. Instruments and music are stored in these lockers during the day and must be labeled with contact information. Please do not store food, shoes, gym clothes or other items not related to orchestra in the lockers.

*River Bend Middle School is not responsible for lost or stolen property. Loudoun County Schools does not provide insurance to cover lost or stolen property. Please check with your homeowner's insurance company to inquire about student instrument insurance.*

# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

## REQUIRED CONCERTS

GRADE	DATE	EVENT	TIME	LOCATION
6 <sup>th</sup> Grade	January 11	Life in Orchestra ( <i>optional</i> )	6:00PM	RBMS
	June 4	Spring Concert	6:00 & 7:00PM	RBMS
7 <sup>th</sup> Grade	December 14	Fall / Winter Concert	6:00PM	RBMS
	May 22	Spring Concert	6:00PM	RBMS
8 <sup>th</sup> Grade	October 25	Spooky Serenade Concert	7:00PM	PFHS
	December 14	Fall/Winter Concert	6:00PM	RBMS
	February 21	Pre-Assessment Concert	6:00PM	RBMS
	<b>March 6 - 9</b>	<u>*Concert Assessment</u>	TBD	TBD
	May 22	Spring Concert	6:00PM	RBMS
	June 7	Spring Festival Trip ( <i>optional</i> )	All Day	Hershey Park

## REQUIRED REHEARSAL(s)

GRADE	DATE	EVENT	TIME	LOCATION
6 <sup>th</sup> Grade	May 30	Spring Concert Rehearsal	8:00AM & 3:45PM	Stage
7 <sup>th</sup> Grade	December 13	Fall / Winter Concert Rehearsal	8:00AM-8:40AM	Stage
	May 21	Spring Concert Rehearsal	8:00AM-8:40AM	Stage
8 <sup>th</sup> Grade	October 25	Spooky Combined Rehearsal	6:10PM	PFHS Stage

## \*CONCERT ASSESSMENT

Concert Assessment typically occurs in March and is comparable to the *Standards of Learning* in other subject areas. We expect all 8<sup>th</sup> grade orchestra students to attend assessment. However, if an 8<sup>th</sup> grade student fails to attend class rehearsals, has behavior infractions, or fails to perform their music adequately, they will not be permitted to attend Assessment. In this case, the student must complete an alternative assignment and will not be allowed to attend the final Spring Music Festival Trip.

## \*SPRING FESTIVAL TRIP

8<sup>th</sup> Grade Orchestra has an optional Spring Festival Trip. To attend this trip, students need to attend all rehearsals, concerts, have no behavior issues, perform their music adequately, demonstrate excellent concert, rehearsal etiquette, attend assessment (RBMS School & Music Department Policy), and be in good academic standing (B or better in music class). There is a fee to attend the *Spring Festival Trip* to cover the cost of the festival, park admission, and travel.

## FIELD TRIPS

Field trips may occur throughout the year and are a reward (not a privilege). To attend any field trip, students need to attend all rehearsals, concerts, have no behavior issues in music class, perform their music adequately, demonstrate excellent concert and rehearsal etiquette, and be in good academic standing (B or better in music class). There may be a fee to attend field trips that help to cover transportation and ticket costs.



# STUDENT AND PARENT ACKNOWLEDGMENT FORM

*(Handbook is in Schoology and on the Orchestra Website)*

STUDENT NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ GRADE: \_\_\_\_\_

I have read and understand the following policies and procedures (**student and parent/guardian initial next to each line after reading required section**):

_____ / _____	<b>Communication</b>
_____ / _____	<b>Grading</b>
_____ / _____	<b>Required Supplies &amp; Concert Attire</b>
_____ / _____	<b>Classroom Policies</b>
_____ / _____	<b>Rehearsal &amp; Performance Calendar</b>
_____ / _____	<b>Excused &amp; Unexcused Absences</b>

I understand that I have read all pages of the Orchestra Handbook. I am responsible for following these policies and procedures as well as attending the required concerts & rehearsals.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Student Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

I understand that I have read all pages of the Orchestra Handbook. I am responsible for upholding these policies and procedures and will work to the best of my ability to help my student meet the above requirements of the course. I will contact the teacher if there are any questions, problems, or concerns.

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

**For 6<sup>th</sup> Grade String Students ONLY:** Please circle the size of T-Shirt your student will wear for concerts this year! Only **one** t-shirt will be given at the beginning of the year.

**Adult Small**

**Adult Medium**

**Adult Large**

**Adult X-Large**