



BLYTHEWOOD MIDDLE SCHOOL Orchestra Handbook 2011-2012



From the Director...

Welcome to the 2011-2012 academic year! I hope your summer was restful and fun-filled! The success of this year depends on your understanding of how this orchestra program works. I know you have received a lot of reading material already, but I urge you to read and review the handbook. I have written it to help you understand the guidelines and expectations that I set in my classes and concerts. I feel certain that this will be a rewarding and productive school year for all of us as we work and grow together.

In the Spirit of Excellence,

Stacey B. Dobyms

Stacey B. Dobyms, MME, NBCT
Orchestra Director
Blythewood Middle School
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IMPORTANT DATES

Monday, August 22

- All handbook contracts must be read and signed electronically to Mrs. Dobyms by this date. The handbook contract may be found on [page 6](#) of this handbook.

Tuesday, August 30

- Open House, 6:00-8:00 pm
- ★**Labor Day Run Meeting:** you may either choose to come to the orchestra room before Open House begins (5:00-5:45 pm) or after (8:00-8:45 pm)

Monday, September 5 (Labor Day)

- BMS Orchestra is hosting the Inaugural Labor Day Run at the Plantation: 10K, 5K and One-Mile Kids Fun Run!!! Please come out to run, walk or volunteer in this fundraising event! Visit www.laborday10K.com for more information!

Monday, September 12

- Daily material checks will begin. If appropriate materials are not present in class, points will be deducted from the student's grade. A list of appropriate materials may be found on [page 5](#) of this handbook.

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BLYTHEWOOD MIDDLE SCHOOL
ORCHESTRAS
2351 Longtown Road East
Blythewood, SC 29016
Tel: 803.691.6850 Ext. 85307
Email: sdobyms@richland2.org
Website:
www.blythewoodorchestra.com

GRADING POLICY

TESTS AND HOMEWORK

Students will have written and performance-based tests and homework. Homework consists of *daily* practice, to prepare for playing tests and performances. Students will also have electronic and playing tests to prepare. They will be expected to demonstrate mastery of their skills learned in class by playing individually or in small groups, as requested by the orchestra director. This is not meant to intimidate anyone, rather it is intended to further musical growth. For playing assignments, students will be assessed using a rubric in the following categories: rhythmic accuracy, pitch accuracy, tone quality, bowing/articulation, tempo and fluency, posture, musical preparation, and memorization. All playing tests must be memorized, unless otherwise indicated by the orchestra director. Feedback from the student's playing test is available on Parent Portal and will be added up to two days after the playing test has been taken.

PREPARATION

Students will be expected to bring all materials to every class, which include: instrument, music/textbook, pencil, rosin, a shoulder rest (violin/viola students only), and a rock stop (cello/bass students only). They will also be expected to be in their seats, with all materials ready for class, two minutes after class starts. All students will begin with a daily grade of 100 points. Five points will be deducted from the daily grade for each material missing, and if the student is not ready for class two minutes after class starts. If points are deducted from the student's daily grade for either of these reasons, a description will be provided on Parent Portal.

CONCERTS

Students will be graded on attendance, appropriate dress, arriving on time and behavior at every concert. Concert grades are worth 100 points. Arriving to a concert on time, with appropriate attire and performing without distraction will earn the student full credit. Arriving late to a concert, with inappropriate attire, or displaying poor behavior will lead to a deduction of 5 points from the concert grade. Absences are only excused for severe illness or emergency. **Transportation problems, sporting events, appointments and homework are not viable excuses. Please plan ahead.**

EXTRA CREDIT

Students may earn extra points by attending approved musical performances (SC Philharmonic Concerts, USC Symphony Concerts), by participating in outside performances (Church or Weddings), or by assisting the orchestra director with projects. Each student will receive 5 points added to their Daily Grade for any above-mentioned event that they participate in/attend. If participating in or attending an event, the student must bring some proof of attendance (ticket stub or program) to the orchestra director. Extra credit events may be found on the new orchestra website: www.blythewoodorchestra.com.



A ten-year study indicates that students who study music achieve higher test scores, regardless of socioeconomic background.

- Dr. James Catterall, UCLA

DISCIPLINE POLICY

- Student Expectations

Upon entering the classroom, students are expected to:

1. Get all materials, unpack and be in their seats **two minutes** after class starts.
2. Follow instructions the first time they are given.
3. Keep self and instrument quiet during tuning and rehearsal.
4. Raise hand to be recognized before speaking.

- Student Consequences

Students who choose to break a rule will receive the following disciplinary action(s):

1 st Time:	Student/Teacher Conference
2 nd Time:	Parent Contacted
3 rd Time:	Referral to Administrator and Parent Contacted

PRACTICE

Students will receive playing assignments every class period that they are to learn at home. A minimum of 30 minutes of practice per day is expected from every orchestra member (45 minutes per day is suggested if the student wants to get an A). Students who have a regular time to practice every day are more consistent players, are better prepared for tests, and perform at a higher level. Consistency is the key to success. Please encourage your son or daughter by allowing them time for practice every day.

PRIVATE LESSONS

All students (especially 7th/8th graders) are encouraged to study with a private teacher. Private instruction is one-on-one, at the student's pace, and it helps each student develop technical and musical skills specific to their instrument. These skills can be well applied to orchestra class. Teacher fees vary, but are generally between \$15 to \$20 for a half hour lesson, and \$30 to \$40 for an hour lesson. Please visit www.thelessonroom.com to find private instructors in the Columbia area, as well as the list on our class website.



The three most influential gifts that parents can provide for children taking orchestra are private lessons with a great teacher, summer music camps, and a quality instrument.

- Dr. Michael Allen, Professor of Music Education at
The Florida State University

CONCERT ATTIRE

A sharp looking performing ensemble adds to the overall aesthetic of the performance, boosts the confidence and the morale of the players, and leaves a positive impression on the audience. It is for these reasons that the orchestra director requires a standard concert uniform to be worn at all performances. Details are below:

LADIES

6th Graders: White dress shirt/blouse: No extra colors, logos, other writing, or sleeveless; Black pants or ankle-length skirt: no exceptions! Small, discreet jewelry permitted (no large earrings, necklaces or bracelets). Dark hose or socks with black dress shoes.

7th/8th Graders: Black dress shirt/blouse: No extra colors, logos, other writing, or sleeveless; Black pants or ankle-length skirt: no exceptions! Small, discreet jewelry permitted (no large earrings, necklaces or bracelets). Dark hose or socks with black dress shoes.

GENTLEMEN

6th Graders: White collared dress shirt: No extra colors, logos or other writing; Black pants, black socks with black dress shoes.

7th/8th Graders: Black collared dress shirt: No extra colors, logos or other writing; Black pants, black socks with black dress shoes.

- **Neither denim nor athletic wear is acceptable concert attire for ladies or gentlemen.**
- **Please note that showing up to a performance dressed inappropriately will result in a loss of 5 points to the student's concert grade.**

CONCERT SEATING ARRANGEMENTS

- For the Winter Concert, seating will reflect how the student performs on playing tests (all grades). During the first semester, the director will keep a record of every students' scores on playing tests. Before the concert, students will receive their seating assignment based on the average of these scores.
- For all Spring Performances, seating will be determined by **one** audio-recorded audition (7th/8th grades only). Students will be graded using a rubric, and the seating order will be based from these scores. 6th grade seating will be determined from playing test scores.
- The orchestra director has the final say on seating assignments. The orchestra director may also move students around based on musical needs. Students may be reseated for disruptive behavior, missing materials, or unexcused tardiness/ absences from class.

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ORCHESTRAS**

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We're on the Web!

Check out our site by visiting
www.blythewoodorchestra.com



OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOU

SC Philharmonic Youth Orchestras

The South Carolina Philharmonic Youth Orchestras provide a quality education in classical music through the performance of symphonic and chamber music to as many talented young musicians as possible from the Greater Columbia area and surrounding counties. This experience enables the young musicians to achieve their highest potential as both performers and patrons of the arts. All three orchestra meet on Sunday afternoons, and perform three concerts a year, two of which will be at the Koger Center. More information can be found on the class web site, under Related Links.

***For information on auditions, please contact
Orchestra Manager Judy Lawrence at 803.788.8442.**

USC String Project

Elementary, Middle and High School students from all over the Midlands have the unique opportunity to study their instrument through private and group instruction. USC undergraduate music education majors gain valuable experience through teaching group instrument classes, private lessons and orchestral ensembles. For more information, including registration information, please visit www.music.sc.edu and click on Centers and Institutes on the left side of the screen.

SCMEA Orchestra Concert Festival

For 15 years, Blythewood Middle School has participated in the state music educators association Concert Festival. This is, by far, our **most important** concert of the year and our performance field trip of the year. In previous years, BMS has earned Superior ratings at this prestigious event. The 7th and 8th grade orchestras will perform on Friday, March 16th at Keenan High School (performance times TBA).

Solo and Ensemble Festival

The Solo and Ensemble Festival allows students to perform a solo piece and/or a small ensemble piece. Students choosing to play at this festival will receive most of their help from their private teachers; however, the school director is also available for coaching. This event will take place on Friday, May 4, 2012. Please contact the director if you are interested in participating, as paperwork will need to be filled out and submitted in March 2012.

REQUIRED EVENTS CALENDAR (2011-2012)

★(If students are late to or miss any of the following events, points will be deducted from their Daily Grade. See page 2 for more information. This information is also on the class website, under calendar.)★

<u>Date</u>	<u>Event Name</u>	<u>Location</u>
Thursday, December 8	Winter Concert Student Report Time 5:45 pm Concert Start Time 6:30 pm	BMS Gymnasium
Tuesday, March 6	Pre-Festival Concert (7th/8th grades only, with BHS Orchestras) Student Report Time 6:25 pm Concert Start Time 7:00 pm	BHS Auditorium
Friday, March 16	SCMEA Concert Festival (7th/8th grades only: Exact Times TBA: Field Trip during School Day)	Keenan HS
Thursday, May 3	Spring Concert Student Report Time 5:45 pm Concert Start Time 6:30 pm	BMS Gymnasium

These dates are posted on our website calendar. Please check the website calendar weekly for extra credit events that may have been added, as well as the most up-to-date information!



WHAT YOU NEED FOR ORCHESTRA CLASS

PLEASE TAKE THIS FORM WITH YOU TO THE MUSIC STORE

_____ is officially enrolled in the *Richland Two Orchestra Program*.

(Your Child's Name)

An instrument may be obtained from any of three local music stores who have agreed to stock the proper sizes and specifications for our district. These stores have reasonable lease, rental, and/or trial purchase plans available. All three stores meet the *Richland Two* standards for student instruments.

One of the principle causes of pupil failure is an inferior instrument and we want to ensure that each child is successful! Due to the fact that there are many school districts in the Columbia/Lexington area, requirements vary from one district to the other. When renting or purchasing an instrument, please be sure it is not only "school approved" but "*Richland Two*" approved, to be sure you are obtaining the best quality instrument needed for a beginning student. DO NOT purchase an instrument on-line or from alternative sources without consulting your teacher first.

The following stores have excellent instruments available. They are listed in alphabetical order. You may do business with whichever store you prefer.

Music & Arts Center

Phone: 865-1905

7201-C Parklane Road (next to the Mall). All instruments

are available. (Other stores are located in Irmo and Lexington.)

Pecknel Music

Phone: 799-6860

732 Saluda Avenue: All instruments are available.

Star Music

Phone: 699-5200

Polo Plaza, 9810 Two Notch Rd., Suite J. All instruments are

available. (Their main store is located on Assembly St., downtown)

You should obtain the following for your child:

1. Instrument: **6th Grade**: Once the instrument is decided upon by the student, parent and director, the child will be given their instrument name and appropriate size.
2. Method Book (be sure the book has the same name as the instrument)
 - 6th Grade: Essential Elements 2000 for Strings, Book I
 - 7th Grade: Essential Elements 2000 for Strings, Book II
 - **8th Grade: String Explorer, Book 2 by Dabczynski, Meyer and Phillips (NEW BOOK)**
 - Grade 9-12: Consult with your orchestra director
3. A folding metal music stand
4. A shoulder rest for violins and violas. We recommend the Kun or Viva. They are a worthwhile investment. Junior and Intermediate violas need to purchase a violin shoulder rest.
5. A rock stop for cello and bass students.
6. A pencil – BRING TO EVERY CLASS!!!
7. A soft cloth to keep the instrument clean – old T-shirts and cloth diapers work well.

Students enrolling in orchestra must understand they are making a commitment to daily practice at home. Good practice habits and a positive attitude have a great effect on the success your child will achieve through this class. Parents are urged to consult the teacher at any time a question or problem arises. The earlier a real working relationship is reached between child, parent, and teacher, the greater your child's success will be.



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MY RESPONSIBILITIES AS YOUR TEACHER

1. To treat you and your peers with respect;
2. To arrive on time and prepared with the necessary materials;
3. To give clear instructions and assignments;
4. To provide the discipline necessary for an effective and enjoyable class;
5. To grade fairly and objectively;
6. To teach you the skills you will need to become a superior orchestra student.

YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES AS MY STUDENT

1. To treat me and your peers with respect;
2. To arrive on time and prepared with the necessary materials;
3. To raise your hand before voicing questions or concerns;
4. To listen and follow all instructions the first time they are given;
5. To give your best effort from the first rehearsal to the last concert;
6. To practice and master the skills you will need to become a superior orchestra student.

I have read and understand the policies and expectations described in the 2011-2012 Orchestra Handbook. I have copied the dates below into my personal calendar and understand that my grade may be lowered if any of these events are missed (Refer to the Grading Policy on page 2).

Click [here](#) to sign this form electronically.