

VMS Orchestra Handbook



Teacher: Mrs. Susan Heinz

Venice Middle School



Quality Instruments

A quality working instrument is extremely important to the success of your student. An instrument that does not stay in tune or that has poor tone will not be fun to play or to practice. ***Please avoid purchasing instruments online...especially from Amazon.com or eBay.*** I have seen many students bring these instruments to school and quit playing because of frustrations involving an unresponsive instrument. **A quality instrument makes all the difference!** I always recommend renting or purchasing the best instrument you can afford. Your student will love playing and love to practice if they hear pleasant sounds coming from their instrument.

Want more info? Read this article about quality instruments [HERE!](#)

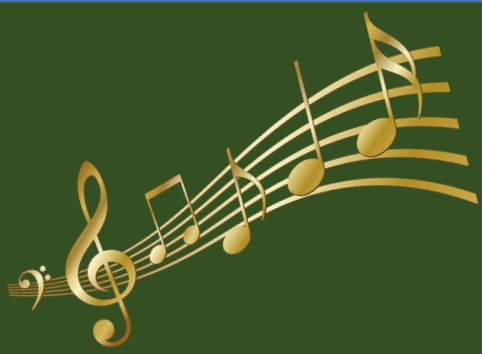




Violin and Viola

Each student will need:

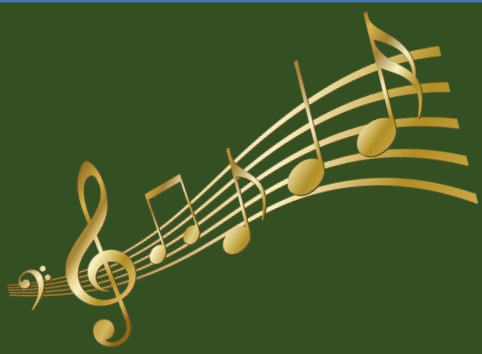
- A quality, playable instrument (purchased or rented from any string instrument source. These are brands I recommend: Johannes Köhr, Howard Core, Franz Hoffman, Carlo Lamberti, Eastman, Klaus Mueller, or Krutz 200 or 250.
- Bow - Carbon fiber bows with real horsehair are ideal.
- Rosin – any brand of rosin will work. My favorite brand is Pirastro. Basses need special bass rosin.
- Shoulder rest – only needed for violin and violas - I recommend Kun or Everest.
- Cleaning cloth - I recommend a soft cotton cloth to wipe down the instrument every day.
- Pencil with a working eraser. I will give you one. **It needs to stay in your orchestra binder!!**
- Music stand for home practice. You can purchase one [HERE](#) or [HERE](#) (or anyplace you'd prefer.)
- Tuner (This is OPTIONAL but HIGHLY recommended to help students learn how to accurately tune their instruments. For violin and viola, I recommend: [D'Addario NS Micro Violin Tuner](#) or [Snark SN-8 Super Tight Tuner](#))



Cello and Double Bass

Each student will need:

- A quality, playable instrument and bow.
- Students who rent cellos or basses from the school must pay a \$53.50 fee which covers rental and routine maintenance for the school year. These instruments may be brought home for practice on the last day of every school week (with appropriate transportation), and they **MUST** be brought back for the start of every week (usually a Monday).
- Students may choose to rent or purchase an instrument from a string instrument source to keep at home. If a student has an instrument at home and **agrees to use their personal instrument at school the week of each concert and in each concert**, they can use a school instrument the other weeks of the school year at no cost, but **they must** complete a rental agreement. These students will be responsible for any damages.
- Rosin – any brand will do. Bass players need to make sure to purchase BASS rosin.
- Pencil with working eraser
- Rock Stop
- Music stand for home practice. You can purchase one [HERE](#) or [HERE](#) (or anyplace you'd prefer.)
- **OPTIONAL** but **HIGHLY RECOMMENDED**: Clip on tuner



School Rental Instruments

Rental Fee: \$53.50/school year – this covers maintenance and minor repairs from normal use.

Students who need to rent an instrument from the school will be assigned an instrument during the first week of school. A rental form must be signed by the student and parent and turned into the teacher **BEFORE** the student can take the instrument home. [Here is the rental form.](#)

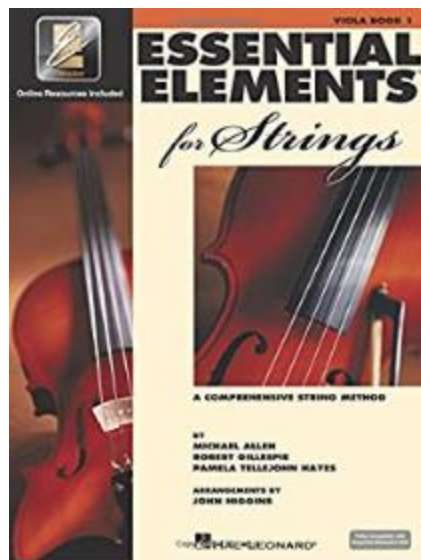
School-owned instruments and equipment become the responsibility of any student who uses the instrument. **Any damage other than normal wear and tear will need to be repaired at the student's expense.** Remember that horseplay can cause damage to instruments.

Some students who rent from the school may be sharing instruments. ANY student who rents their instrument from the school can take their instrument home to practice. Cellos and basses may be taken home on a first-come, first-served basis for weekends only. Because some instruments are shared, these instruments **MUST** be returned on the first return day after the weekend (usually a Monday).

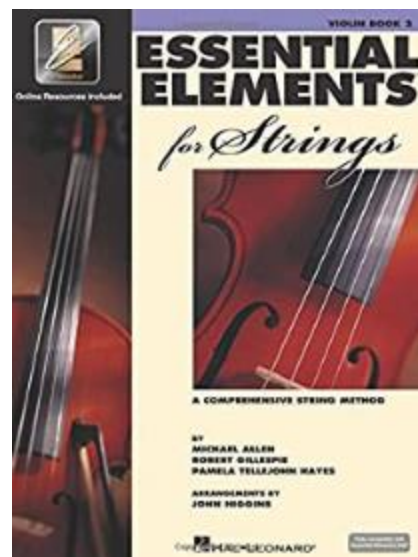


Method Books

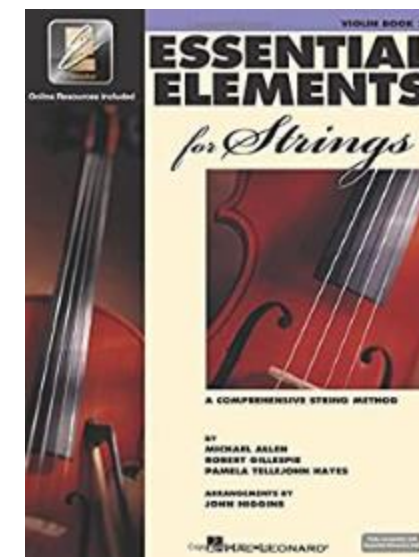
Each student will need a method book.
Please be sure to purchase the correct book for your **level and instrument**.



Orchestra 1 – Concert Orchestra:
Essential Elements 2000, **Book 1**



Orchestra 2 – Intermediate Orchestra:
Essential Elements 2000, **Book 2**



Orchestra 3 - Advanced Orchestra:
Essential Elements 2000, **Book 2**



Labelling

Please make sure you **label all your equipment with your first and last name**. You **do not** need to label your **instrument** – but **PLEASE label (and perhaps personalize) the case**. If your student leaves their instrument in math or science class, we want to be sure it makes its way back to you quickly.





String Orchestra Supplies

**Supplies, books, and equipment may be
rented/purchased at:**

- Florida Violins (941) 227-6784
- Violin Shop Sarasota (941) 217-4977
- Triton Music Services (941) 677-8150
- William Harris Lee (800) 447-4533
- Troll Music (941) 484-8765

Recommended online resources:

- Shar Music: www.sharmusic.com
- Southwest Strings: www.swstrings.com



What to bring to class

Students are expected to come to class prepared with all equipment every day – *instrument, music, pencil, rosin, shoulder rest (violin/viola), rock stop (cello/bass)*.

Participation points for the day will be lost if a student comes to class unprepared.

Students will NOT need instruments on the first day of school. They will be advised on an instrument rental night near the beginning of the school year.



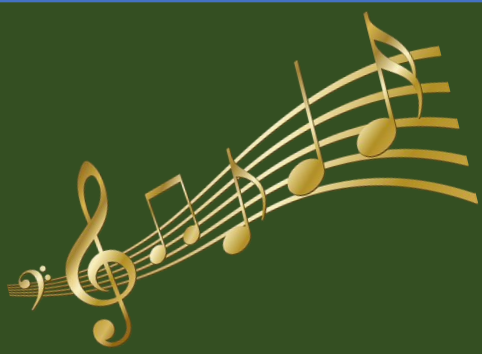


Where to put stuff

Each student will be given an orchestra binder to organize music that is needed for the class. Students must keep their method book and all music inside their binder with the pencil, which I will also provide for them at school.

The orchestra room is very limited in space. Each student will be assigned a cubby for their music. Students will be asked to clean up their seat area each day following their class. Those who leave folders on stands after class or do not put away supplies will lose participation points.





Rehearsal Expectations

It is expected that each student will comply with both Sarasota County Schools and Venice Middle School policies as well as additional guidelines as follows:



Student Expectations

- Follow directions, the first time, with promptness and accuracy. Stay on task and develop an appropriate mindset for teamwork and success.
- Students must be prepared for class every day. Be in your seat ready to play when the bell rings, with all necessary equipment, binder, method book, and pencil. All students must have their own method book and binder for every rehearsal. Students must stay in their assigned seats. Always be ready to play on the conductor's downbeat.
- RESPECT everyone and everything within the room and school. Do not play your instrument during tuning, or while instructions are being given. During the rehearsal, show respect while someone else is talking by giving them your attention. Respectful silence is also expected while another section of the orchestra is rehearsing. You may, however, silently practice with ghost fingering to further your skills while waiting for your turn.





Student Expectations

- The room is full of expensive instrument and equipment. **DO NOT TOUCH or PLAY** any instrument or equipment not intended for your personal use. **Play only your instrument.** Students who damage instruments or equipment due to careless behavior will be charged the repair or replacement fee.
- Mark your music, with a **PENCIL**, as directed and needed in every rehearsal. Do not rely on your memory. This will allow us to have a more enjoyable and productive rehearsal. Using a pencil shows that you want to play the music well.
- Homework or study for other courses is not to be done during class time.
- Please, if needed, ask to use the restroom during the first 3 minutes of class, or for emergencies. Students are encouraged to use the restroom and take care of any other errands prior to class.
- The bell does not dismiss you; the teacher dismisses you.





Cell Phones

This is a class in which, if everyone tries their best, we will all be successful. Students are required to be responsible by coming to class prepared with their pencil, instrument, music, and a positive, attentive attitude. **Cell phones must be out of sight and never used during an orchestra rehearsal.** It is best for cell phones to be silenced and stored in backpacks during rehearsal. Your undivided attention is needed to help you and the rest of the group master the music and achieve greatness. There is a "cell phone prison" available for uncooperative cell phones.





Concert Dates

PLEASE MARK YOUR CALENDARS and SAVE THE DATES!!!

Performances are normally 30% of a student's grade each quarter. According to the SCSB Curriculum, Orchestra is a CO-Curricular class which means that students can be graded on events outside of the school day.

* Orchestra students are required to be at all the following events. Each performance is worth 500 points.

* An alternate assignment may be given based on situation (death in family, illness, etc.), but will not be given for simply “missing the concert” (etc.). Parents must speak directly to Mrs. Heinz to request the alternate assignment.

Thursday, October 13, 7 PM

Thursday, December 1, 7 PM

Thursday, February 9, 7 PM

*****February 15, 16, or 17 Time TBA**

Thursday, May 4, 7 PM

Fall Concert At VMS Gymnasium

Winter Concert at VMS Gymnasium

Pre-Festival Concert at VMS Gymnasium

District Concert MPA – *Advanced Orchestra Only**

Spring Concert at VMS Gymnasium



Concert Dress

Orchestra performances are **REQUIRED**

and account for 30% of a student's orchestra grade each quarter.

Performances are a team effort, and as such, all students are needed to achieve appropriate balance and blend. We work hard during rehearsals to make concerts an enjoyable experience for students and audience members.

Proper Orchestra Dress is a part of your child's Concert Grade!

What to Wear:

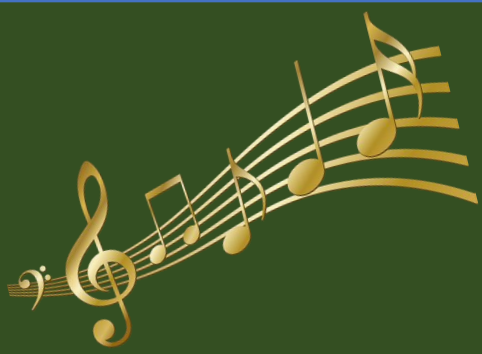
Beginning and Intermediate Orchestra: Black on the bottom, white on top: white dress shirt, black pants or black long skirt (below the knees), black socks or stockings, and black dress shoes.



Advanced Orchestra:

All Black: black dress shirt, black pants or long skirt (below the knees), black socks or stockings, and black dress shoes.





Grading Policy: Participation

Participation/Effort - 40% of Overall Grade

*Musicianship includes having your instrument, music, and pencil in class every day. It also includes class participation, effort, and behavior. (20 Points per day)

DON'T FORGET YOUR INSTRUMENT, MUSIC, PENCIL or OTHER MATERIALS.

*Tardiness will result in a lowered musicianship grade for the week, unless excused.

* Attendance- Attend each school day to the best of your ability. Attendance is not graded, however, the more you are absent the more you need to make up. Notify the teacher if you will be absent, so that you may receive work ahead of time. Grades are posted for viewing on Crosspointe and are updated as often as possible.



Grading Policy: Quizzes

Quizzes and Assignments - 30% of Overall Grade

- * Weekly Performance Quizzes (100 Points per Quiz)
- * Rhythm Counting, Worksheets, Class Work, Etc.

Performance Quizzes will be completed over several days. Student will receive 1 chance to pass the exercise. If they cannot, they will not pass off. They can try again on the next pass-off opportunity. Students that are missing numerous pass-offs and exercises **MUST** seek out help from the instructor. Failure to do so will result in dismissal from the Orchestra Program.



Grading Policy: Concerts

Performances - 30% of Overall Grade

Orchestra is a performance class. Members of the orchestra are required to perform at ALL scheduled performances.

- * According to the SCSB Curriculum, Orchestra is a CO-Curricular class which means that students can be graded on events outside of the school day.
- * Students are **required** to be at all outside events. Each performance is worth 500 points.
- * Proper concert dress and behavior at the concert factors into the Concert Grade
- * An alternate assignment may be given based on situation (death in family, illness, etc.), but will not be given for simply “missing the concert” (etc.). Parents must speak directly to Mrs. Heinz to request the alternate assignment.



Parent Support

Parents are an important part of the Venice Middle School Orchestra and I greatly appreciate all you do to support our orchestra program. You can be supportive of the orchestra program and your child's participation by:

1. Assisting your child to be prepared and punctual for every rehearsal and performance.
2. Notifying the director if your child is to be absent or late for a performance.
3. Encouraging your child to practice at home and helping them to find a quiet place to do so.
4. Showing your interest and support in your child's music study by attending performances.
5. Discussing with the director anything that will help me better understand and serve your child.
6. Arrange for private lessons when possible.



Orchestra Contract

Click on the link below to submit your assignment and complete the Orchestra Contract.

This is due for a grade on Friday, August 19, 2022

[Click Here](#)
[To Sign](#)
[Orchestra Contract](#)