

# Harrison Orchestra Syllabus

**Course Description:** This course is designed to develop musical understanding through ensemble and individual skill development on musical instruments from the standard string orchestra family (violin, viola, cello and double bass). Strong emphasis is put on the process of developing music reading and skills of musicianship through ensemble rehearsal and performance. The class will rehearse daily during school hours. Depending on the event we are preparing for, there may be additional before/after school rehearsals. Classes will perform publicly several times during the school year. Some orchestras may have additional performances. Please check the calendar on the Harrison Orchestra website for updates at: [www.harrisonorchestra.org](http://www.harrisonorchestra.org)

**Grades:** Grades will be based on these components:

Performance/Written Assessments	50%
Rehearsal Skills	40%
Final Exam	10%

## REHEARSAL SKILLS

The Rehearsal Skills grade is determined by the student's ability to be prepared, have all necessary materials (instrument, music, pencil, etc.), and to take part in all in-class activities, in order to learn standard "common practice" expectations as musicians. No food, beverage (except for water with a screw top lid), or gum is to be permitted in the orchestra room during rehearsal. Rehearsal Skills in all levels of orchestras will be assessed by a student's ability to uphold and maintain their best: correct playing position, technical skills, aural skills, performance practices and styles, music history and its historical connection to the literature, music theory, diverse orchestral literature appropriate for the various progressions of each ensemble, chamber music skills (i.e. small ensemble), and standard rehearsal etiquette. **Long fingernails are unacceptable in performing on string instruments and will be graded on accordingly as part of the rehearsal skills grade.**

## PRACTICE STANDARD

Once a student has been introduced to a specific skill, individual practice is expected in order to master the skill. Students should practice daily in order to achieve ongoing progress. Similar to that of a runner, the benefit in conditioning gives results from consistent practice. 20-30 minutes of daily practice will be significantly more effective than 2 hours once a week. Good practice habits have a great effect on the success students will achieve in class. Please understand that in order to achieve excellence as an individual and to promote the growth of the ensemble, daily practice is necessary at home or before school. "Star (\*)" passages needing practice during rehearsal. Neglecting individual practice will slow down the progress of the class and each individual student. Please be considerate of others in your preparation. Standard rehearsal practice ensures the ensemble's ability to progress during rehearsals. All students are expected to follow rehearsal guidelines as outlined by the director and to respect their fellow orchestra members. The importance of *courtesy* within the orchestra will ensure your success in rehearsing and performing together as a unified orchestra.

## CLASS EXPECTATIONS

Students are expected to be prepared for class daily. This includes appropriate preparation of their music and having their materials for class. Follow directions and arrive to class on time (See School Tardy Policy). Students are to enter the classroom quietly, leave book-bags in blue-taped area, and retrieve necessary materials (instrument, music, tuner, book, pencil, shoulder rest, rosin, etc.) before class begins. Cell phones are to remain in the book-bag. While tuning, starting from silence is the standard. **At the end of each class, all students are expected to loosen their bow.**

## ATTENDANCE

Students are expected to participate in all rehearsals and performances unless excused by the director. This includes any extra before or after school rehearsals and/or performances. Advanced notice is to be given to the director if a prior commitment causes a student to miss a rehearsal or performance.

**A prior commitment is a date already committed to another event when the orchestra rehearsal/performance is announced**, not something more attractive that comes up a week before the rehearsal/performance. If you have a conflict, please inform Mr. Mori via email by the **next day after a rehearsal or concert date is announced**. Religious holidays or conflicts with individual religious beliefs are considered excused, if the director is notified in writing by a parent. Conflicts with sports/clubs/extra curriculars are resolvable but must be communicated as soon as possible.

## MAKE UP

If a student misses a rehearsal/performance for any reason, they must schedule an appointment to perform their literature with the director for assessment of their individual part. Because the orchestra is a large group/team ensemble, please understand that missing a rehearsal/performance impacts all of the students in the ensemble who have worked incredibly hard to prepare for their performance. Every student is highly valued and although unforeseeable emergencies (i.e., death in the family, illness, etc.) unfortunately take place, the expectation is to communicate as soon as possible for any possible absence. Please contact Mr. Mori via email if there is a conflict/emergency with an event in the calendar as soon as possible.

## EQUIPMENT LIST

This is a list of items needed for orchestra class. It is necessary that you have these items by the second week of school. Most music stores or online retailers will have these items in stock:

1. **Instrument & Name.** Please take the time to have your instrument checked for adjustment and size where it was rented/purchased. A new set of strings may also be in order (should be replaced at least yearly). Please replace *Super Sensitive* strings with the Tomastik *Dominant* strings or better. Save old strings in case yours break. A poorly functioning instrument will slow progress. Bow hair should be clean and full. Proper maintenance is expected. **ALL CASES MUST BE LABELED WITH A STUDENT'S FIRST AND LAST NAME.**
2. **Tuner.** A small tuner with bridge hook-up, or a tuner app. The Korg chromatic tuner/metronome is recommended. You can purchase this and the bridge hook-up at an area music store, or you may go online to purchase one. You may also purchase a tuning app on your phone. The Tonal Energy app is the recommended tuner but there are many other tuners available for your phone.
3. **Pencil.** Bring it daily.
4. **Shoulder Rest** for viola and violin players. This is an absolute necessity for proper technique and posture. Investing in a good quality shoulder rest is highly recommended as some shoulder rests do not stay on the instrument well. Ask a local string shop (who has a luthier) for recommendations.
5. **Rock Stop** for cello and bass players for home use, camps, and concerts.
6. **Rosin** – All students must have their own rosin.
7. **Extra Set of Strings** for your instrument. **STRINGS BREAK!**
8. **Music Stand** for home practice and trips. This is also important to ensure good posture.
9. **Soft Cloth** to keep the instrument clean - old T-shirts work fine. Rosin builds up over time and will can cause problems when playing. In addition, rosin build up can harm the finish on your instrument. Wipe off strings to prevent harm to the instrument. Never put water or soap on any instrument.

# Harrison Orchestra Syllabus

Please check:

\_\_\_\_\_ I have read, understand, and agree that I am responsible for everything in the Orchestra Syllabus.

\_\_\_\_\_ I understand that Daily Participation and Practice are expected.

\_\_\_\_\_ I understand that Harrison High School is not and will not be liable for any instruments left overnight

\_\_\_\_\_ Student Name (please print)

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

\_\_\_\_\_ Parent Name (please print)

\_\_\_\_\_ Parent Signature

\_\_\_\_\_ Parent Email Address

\_\_\_\_\_ (Date)

Comments/ Conflicts \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
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Please detach and return this signed page by Wednesday