

**Alpharetta High School Orchestras
Student & Parent Handbook 2022-2023**



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Welcome to the Alpharetta Orchestra Program!

This handbook has been compiled for the parents and students of the orchestra program at Alpharetta High School. It is designed to acquaint the orchestra members and parents with the requirements, expectations, and procedures in orchestra class.

The Alpharetta Orchestra program is part of a tradition of excellence in instrumental music instruction and performance within the Fulton County Schools. I am very honored to be the director and look forward to working with all of you this year!

In order to avoid conflicts with the stated policies, all orchestra members and parents are urged to read this handbook so that the student and parent expectations are understood.

To the Students: Welcome to the Alpharetta Orchestra! I am very proud to be your director and I hope you are ready for a successful year. I know that you will enjoy the experience of being involved in a group that includes students who have outstanding citizenship and strive for musical excellence. There is a lot of hard work that will be required of you during this year, and by trying your best and keeping a positive attitude you will reap all the rewards that will come as a result of your effort.

My responsibility to each of you is to accept you for what you are NOW, not what you will be or what you have been, and to demonstrate to the best of my ability that music is a way of expression, a way of working together, a way of sharing and understanding ourselves and each other better. Let's have some fun!!

To the Parents: As the director, I am here not only to help the student, but also to work with each of you in achieving a quality education in music for your child. If it were not for your support, encouragement, and approval, the quality of your child's education would suffer. For more information on your role in your child's education, see the section of this handbook entitled *Parent Involvement*.

Communication is key in any partnership and extremely important when dealing with the amount of information that your son/daughter receives at school. I will do my best to keep the website current and send periodic email newsletters that will help keep you up to date with important news and upcoming events. Please be sure to subscribe with your e-mail address on the website so that you can receive all of this information. If I can be of any assistance, or if you have any questions, suggestions, or concerns, please feel free to contact me.

Musically,

Mr. Hood

I. COURSE SCOPES AND GOALS

A. MEMBERSHIP IN THE ORCHESTRA PROGRAM

The orchestra program is open to all students demonstrating the desire, ability, and proper attitude to be a member of the group. Each student will have an equal and fair opportunity for participation

in the orchestra program. Students will be placed in an orchestral ensemble at the discretion of the director based upon the student's achievement from the previous year and/or recommendations of previous instructors.

B. ORCHESTRAL ENSEMBLES

The **Concert Orchestra** (1st period) is the first level intermediate orchestra. The content of this course includes instruction in performance techniques with emphasis placed on technical and musical skills through the study of rudimentary exercises and mainly grade 3 string orchestra repertoire. Individual practice outside of class time is necessary for successful mastery of performance standards. [FCS Course Name: Beg Orchestra.] *Prerequisite: previous orchestra experience or teacher recommendation.*

The **Philharmonia Orchestra** (2nd period) is the second level intermediate orchestra. The content of this course includes instruction in performance techniques with emphasis placed on technical and musical skills through the study of rudimentary exercises and mainly grade 4 string orchestra repertoire. Individual practice outside of class time is necessary for successful mastery of performance standards. [FCS Course Name: Int. Orchestra.] *Prerequisite: Audition*

The **Sinfonia Orchestra** (3rd period) is an advanced-level orchestra. This course includes advanced instruction in performance techniques with emphasis placed on technical and musical skills through the study of mainly grade 5 string orchestra repertoire. Individual practice outside of class time is necessary for successful mastery of performance standards. [FCS Course Name: Adv. Orchestra.] *Prerequisite: Audition*

The **Symphony Orchestra** (4th period) is comprised of students with the highest skill level and serves as one of the premiere performing ensembles at AHS. Students in this course will demonstrate a mastery level of proficiency on violin, viola, cello, bass, or harp. The strings from Symphony will combine with woodwind, brass, and percussion to form a full orchestra. Students should be prepared to complete rigorous performance assessments and spend time outside of class for performances. Individual practice outside of class time is necessary for successful mastery of performance standards. [FCS Course Name: Mastery Orchestra, Section 1.] *Prerequisite: Audition*

The **Chamber Orchestra** (7th period) is comprised of students at the very highest skill level and serves as the elite string ensemble at AHS. Students in this course will demonstrate a mastery level of proficiency on violin, viola, cello, bass. The chamber orchestra members will also perform in the AHS Symphony Orchestra. Students should be prepared to complete rigorous performance assessments and spend time outside of class for performances. Individual practice outside of class time is necessary for successful mastery of performance standards. [FCS Course Name: Mastery Orchestra, Section 2.] *Prerequisite: Audition*

Note: *Students must demonstrate that they can uphold their standing in their respective orchestra class both musically and behaviorally. If the student is not successful, the student may be removed from the orchestra or placed in a different orchestra class at the director's discretion.*

C. GOAL OF THE AHS MUSIC DEPARTMENT

To provide the orchestra students of AHS with the opportunity to develop into responsible, contributing adults of society.

C. GOALS OF THE ORCHESTRA PROGRAM

1. To participate in the performance of music and learn the technical skills of playing an instrument, which will result in a positive learning experience.
2. To attain a mastery of the instrument and feel the satisfaction of achieving something worthwhile through concentrated effort.
3. To awaken a sense of creativeness and provide an avenue for self-expression.
4. To develop performance skills necessary for independence as a string player.
5. To elevate students to achieve and surpass the National Music Standards and State Benchmarks set forth by the National Association for Music Education, the American String Teachers Association, and the State of Georgia.
6. To identify and authentically perform various musical styles which developed throughout history.
7. To develop attitudes enabling students to continue participating in musical experiences throughout their life.

II. GRADING PROCEDURES

A. GENERAL EXPECTATIONS:

- Come to class prepared with an instrument, bow, music, book, pencil and accessories.
- Cooperate in rehearsal with appropriate effort, attitude, and conduct.
- Practice instrument regularly to make a personal improvement every week.
- Complete all required playing exams and written work
- Attend scheduled performances prepared and dressed in the appropriate uniform.
- Keep a positive attitude, be willing to learn and have fun!!!



B. GRADING: A student's semester grade will be determined by a combination of points that they have earned during the nine-week grading period. Points will be given in the following areas:

1. Major Assignments – 55%

Performance Evaluations

- Performance evaluations are designed to individually assess improvement of the skills and techniques that are taught in class and in preparation for performances.
- Students may also be asked to prepare and perform a solo and form small ensembles each semester as part of this grade.
- Other large performance-based assessments may fall into this category.
- Arriving to class and rehearsals on time; being respectful to the teacher, fellow classmates, or any guest; coming to class prepared; demonstrating proper rehearsal behavior & positive attitude.

2. Minor Assignments – 35%

- Assigned written class work, written homework assignments, written quiz, reflection,

post, practice vlog or chart, or music folder checks. Any online form, paper form, or permission slip that must be completed, signed and returned.

- Smaller performance evaluations are designed to individually assess improvement of the skills and techniques that are taught in class and in preparation for performances.
- In addition, students may receive a grade based on the director's assessment of student progress over a period of time.
- Evaluations may consist of any combination of announced and unannounced playing tests given in-class (live) or recorded via audio or video (in-class or at home).

3. Practice Assignments - 10%

- The majority of the 'Practice' section of the gradebook will be Sightreading Factory assignments on a bi-weekly basis. These are designed to improve musical literacy levels of all students and will help prepare them for success in higher level orchestras. Student growth over time, in the area of sightreading, will be an important factor when considering placement results for orchestral placement for the following school year.

C. GRADING SCALE: Letter grades will be assigned according to Fulton County's approved grading scale, which is as follows: A—100-90, B—89-80, C—79-70, F—69-0. Honors points are added by the county at the end of each semester. Additional information can be found in the AHS Handbook for Students and Parents.

A note about home practice:

- Practice is an integral part of orchestra class and learning to play any instrument. Every student enrolled in the AHS Orchestra program is expected to regularly practice all lessons, skills, techniques, concepts and concert music taught in class. Students should plan to devote time each day for home practice. The required amount of practice time is determined by your level of mastery of the musical material. Every student will be different, therefore there is no set "number of minutes" requirement. Musical success any performing ensemble achieves is directly related to the quality practice time the individual member brings to that ensemble.

D. ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITY: All students wishing to participate in extra-curricular (off campus) events must have, and maintain, at least a 2.0 GPA with no F's in any class. Any student failing to remain eligible shall be suspended from all extra-curricular orchestral activities until their academic status has been regained. However, this does not excuse the student from attending orchestral functions, such as rehearsals and on-campus concerts; alternate assignments will be required.

III. CLASSROOM CONDUCT & OPERATING PROCEDURES

A. CLASS BEHAVIOR: Students will find that some of the policies in the orchestra handbook are similar to those in the school handbook.

1. Obey all school policies. School rules and policies are in effect at any time a student is involved in an activity sponsored by or in the name of the Fulton County Schools.
2. Treat others and their property with **respect**.
3. No talking, playing, or plucking while the director, assistant director, or student leader is giving directions or working with students.
4. Be in your seat, warming up, and prepared to play within three minutes after the bell rings.
5. Remain in your seat at all times. Please raise your hand and wait until called on before talking. Hall passes will be issued sparingly.
6. Bring your materials (instrument, book, music, pencil, etc.) to class every day. **Phones and other personal electronic devices must remain in your bag during class.**
7. Do not touch equipment that does not belong to you.
8. Put away your music and instrument after each rehearsal.
9. Do not bring food, gum, or drinks (except water) in the orchestra room.
10. No running or horseplay in the orchestra room, instrument room or hallways.

B. DAILY CLASS PROCEDURE: With few exceptions, the daily class procedure will be as follows:

1. Students enter class, quickly, unpack and set-up for class. Assignments will be posted on the board or a written assignment (bell work) may be given.
2. Tuning procedure (varies by class)
3. Director or principal player leads the class warm-up
4. Class proceeds with the day's lesson
5. Conclusion & announcements
6. Pack-up instruments, put away music, straighten-up the classroom
7. Director dismisses the class (not the bell).

C. CLASSROOM DISCIPLINE: If you are unable to comply with the classroom rules, you will be dealt with accordingly.

- 1st infraction: Verbal Warning and a teacher / student discussion after class
- 2nd infraction: Time out/mini conferences and reduction of life skills grade
- 3rd infraction: Detention and a phone call to parent
- 4th infraction: Discipline referral

* **Note:** If a student severely disrupts class to the extent that the educational process is disrupted (e.g. fight, etc.), they will be sent to the office IMMEDIATELY and may automatically receive a discipline referral.

D. ATTENDANCE: Orchestra members are required to attend all scheduled classroom rehearsals and performances in order to maintain an exceptional performance standard. As a co-curricular course, rehearsals and performances are part of the educational process. Absences and tardiness affect not only the individual who is absent but also the entire ensemble.

Unexcused Absence: An unexcused absence from class or an extra rehearsal will count as zero for that particular day and the student may receive a lower participation grade. Unexcused absences may also result in a lower performance grade, being placed further back in the section or not being allowed to perform a given concert.

Excused Absence: Absences are excused only in cases of emergency. In the case of illness, parents or students should notify the director as early as possible. If an unanticipated absence occurs, a written request for excuse from a parent or guardian is due within two days of the absence.

Concert Attendance Policy: Performances are mandatory and are classified as a major part of a student's grade. **Any** absence, with the exception of an emergency, not brought to the director's attention for approval **prior** to the performance will be considered unexcused. Unexcused absences from performances will be counted as zeros. Requests for consideration to be excused from performance must be turned in to the director, in writing from the parent or guardian, at least 14 days in advance of the scheduled performance date. Unexcused absences from concerts include, but are not limited to: Appointments, lack of transportation, baby-sitting, birthday celebrations, oversleeping, shopping, sports practices or games, meetings, work, and vacation. These will not be accepted as valid excuses for missing a concert.

E. TARDY POLICY: Students must be on time for all assigned orchestra functions. Learning to be early will establish a lifelong habit that is critical to an individual's and this organization's success. Being on time is defined as follows: At the requested time, the student is in his or her assigned seat with the instrument, bow, music and a pencil. For all performances a call time will be assigned. Any student who is not present, or in place, by the assigned call time will be counted as tardy. This tardy will result in a lowered grade for that performance. Habitual tardiness will be handled in accordance with the policies listed in the Alpharetta HS student handbook.

F. CONFLICTS WITH ORCHESTRA: Rehearsal and performance calendars are normally given out well in advance. While not always 100% preventable, every effort will be made to eliminate conflicts with other major school activities. It is the policy of the orchestra to assist students when conflicts occur within the scope of orchestra policy. Conflicts should be brought to the director's attention **IN WRITING** as soon as the student is aware of a discrepancy. A minimum of two weeks notice should be given, but earlier is better. Students should not expect to automatically be excused because of conflicts.

Students are reminded that orchestra is a demanding activity and does require a commitment of time inside *and* outside of the school day. All orchestra concerts will take top priority over most school sports and other extracurricular activities because orchestra is a *co-curricular, academic* class. Please do not hesitate to contact Mr. Hood with questions.

G. SEATING ASSIGNMENTS: The goal of this orchestra is to work together to achieve musical goals. While the major determining process for seating will be playing tests and student achievement, the director reserves the right to change seating assignments at any time deemed appropriate within

the course of the year. To assign seating, the director may choose from several different processes. Students begin their “audition” the first day of class by being prepared for class, showing outstanding class participation, and showing competency on their instrument. Section leaders need to exemplify positive leadership behavior and may be responsible for helping the director with marking student music and keeping their section in line both musically and behaviorally. Final seating assignments for performances will be determined by an average of all playing tests, as well as musical decisions made by the director. ** Please remember that it is not that important where one sits. It is more important to be of an attitude and mindset of giving one’s best at all times, funneling all effort toward the betterment of the ensemble.

H. AUDIENCE ETIQUETTE: Being a courteous audience member is as important as being a good performer. Proper audience etiquette shows respect for the performers and their work. Talking, whispering, or moving around is not acceptable during a concert. It is very distracting for the performers on stage and is also distracting to other audience members who are trying to enjoy the concert. If parents or other guests come to a concert late, please enter between musical selections so that you do not interrupt the performance. Audience etiquette will be reviewed prior to concerts.

I. MAKE-UP ASSIGNMENTS: In the event a student is excused from a performance, class or rehearsal, a make-up assignment will be given. The make-up assignment will require the students to perform for the director, individually, all of the music from the missed performance plus additional material, which may include written work as deemed appropriate by the director.

J. COMMUNITY PERFORMANCES: As a means of making a positive contribution to the city of Alpharetta and Fulton County, the orchestra is called upon to give community performances from time to time. These performances could be during the school day, after school, evenings or weekends. As these performances are essential to maintaining a positive relationship with these supportive communities, all orchestra students are required to take an active part in community performances. The director will make assignments for musicians for extra performances as may be necessary. Every effort will be made to give at least two weeks notice for extra performances.

K. STUDENT LEADERS: The student leaders may be asked to assist with some of the everyday operations of the orchestra. Any student assigned to a leadership role must remember that the position comes with a great deal of responsibility.

The **concertmaster** is the first chair in the first violin section. This person will be appointed after several playing exams are completed. Concertmasters are the student leaders of the orchestra. They may be held responsible for daily tuning and warm-up procedure and to help keep all of the rehearsals progressing by communicating with the members of the 1st violins and all of the other section leaders as well.

Section leaders are the people who lead the other individual string sections, usually the first chair of each section. If the section leader is not holding up the responsibility, the instructor has the right to reassign this position to another orchestra member. A good-strong section leader displays a positive attitude at all times. Communication between all section leaders, concertmaster and director is vital.

L. ORCHESTRA LEADERSHIP DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES: Leadership goes above and beyond the call of duty. Responsibilities and duties of leadership begin with being leaders not only during rehearsals and performances, but 24/7. During rehearsal time, leadership is expected to be

participating in the rehearsal. Duties that require extra time must be executed outside of rehearsal time except when the duty is directly related to the rehearsal itself.

Manager(s): The General Manager of the orchestra presides over all business meetings of the orchestra, leads the orchestra in fundraising events, oversees duties and responsibilities of all other orchestra officers, and represents orchestra membership at officer meetings. The managers must be a senior or junior.

Librarians: The Librarians are responsible for the issue, collection and filing of all music, accomplishing library work, and keeping the library facilities neat and orderly.

Technology Information: The Technology Information officers are responsible for taking digital pictures of rehearsals, trips and other events pertaining to the orchestra. They will print some pictures for posters and give pictures to the webmaster for posting on the AHS Orchestra website and social media accounts. They will also be responsible for producing and finding help to produce a slideshow or video for the Awards Banquet at the end of the year. They are also responsible for helping students use CHARMS and other technology.

Operations: The operations officers are responsible for the daily set-up of the orchestra room and movement of equipment to and from rehearsals and performances outside the rehearsal room. The operations officers also recruit extra help as needed from within each orchestra. The operations officers will assist with the storage, issue and collection of all school owned instruments and checking out instrument lockers, combination locks and upkeep of the locker room. The operations officer works with parent volunteers to assist with uniforms.

Student Services: The student services are responsible for setting up community service projects both on and off campus as well as projects that do not include performance with a musical instrument. They are responsible for establishing students into individual, small group performance ensembles for campus service and community service events. Finally they are responsible for finding student volunteers to participate in on and off campus volunteer projects that do not require a performance ensemble.

M. EARNING A VARSITY LETTER & SERVICE BARS/STARS

Students may earn a varsity letter for participation in Orchestra events. After two years a student earns a letter; additional years earn service bar pins, and additional participation (all-county, all-state, leadership, etc.) may earn additional bars or star pins. Verification of points for the year will be completed by leadership and director approx. 4 weeks before the awards banquet.

IV. MATERIALS

A. REQUIRED MATERIALS:

1. **All students** need an instrument and bow in good playing condition with the following accessories: Rosin, Polishing/cleaning cloth, Music stand, Case tag labeled with student's name, address, phone number, and email address.
2. **1 inch black binder**- Binder must be black and have a clear sleeve on the front.
3. **Violin and viola students** must use a rigid (i.e. Everest, Kun, etc.) shoulder rest. The foam/sponge type of rests should be avoided.
4. **Cello and bass students** must use a rockstop, especially when playing on wood or tile surfaces. Rockstops help prevent floor damage at school and at home.
5. **Fresh, High Quality Strings** – It is recommended that students (especially violin/viola) plan for the worst by keeping an extra set of quality strings on-hand. Students must change their strings at least once per school year. The “change it when it breaks” method for changing strings is not acceptable since strings lose their pitch and vitality long before they actually break. Using old or low-quality strings will make instruments sound thin, weak, and difficult to tune.
6. **Metronome/Chromatic tuner** -- A metronome is an electronic device that helps a student keep a steady beat. A chromatic tuner can aid students as they learn to tune on their own. Most phones support free apps that suit this purpose. If this is not an option most Korg models are acceptable.

B. SCHOOL INSTRUMENT USE & RENTAL FEE: Orchestra students become eligible to use school-owned instruments in class, pending availability, by submitting an Instrument Agreement Form. Students are expected to maintain good condition of these instruments and will accept responsibility for any 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.

C. INSTRUMENT STORAGE/LOCKERS: All students will be issued a locker at no cost and may be asked to share with one other student. Instruments and music are stored in these lockers during the day. Please do not store food, shoes, gym clothes or other items not related to orchestra in the storage rooms. Students will always need to *keep their locker locked* to protect their valuables from being stolen or tampered with. If locks are stolen or broken, it is the responsibility of the students sharing the locker to replace the lock. Lock replacement value is \$10.00. Any damage to the locker itself will be the financial responsibility of the students.

***Note:** AHS and Fulton County Schools do not provide insurance to cover lost or stolen property. Please check with your homeowner's insurance company or instrument insurance company to inquire about student instrument insurance. See Mr. Hood for insurance company recommendations.*

D. INSTRUMENT CARE: Stringed instruments and bows are very delicate. Always be careful when handling your personal instrument or any other instrument.

- It is required that all instruments are kept in good playing condition.
- When not in use, always place the instrument and bow securely in the case. Even if the instrument is stored securely, damage may occur if the case is not latched or jarred.
- Always loosen the bow before returning it to the case. Never over-tighten the bow.
- Using a lint-free cloth, always wipe the instrument clean of dust and rosin build-up. Never touch the bow hair. Oils from the skin will ruin the horsehair.
- Be careful not to bump the pegs or bridge of the instrument.
- Do your best to wash your hands before you play your instrument.
- Keep instruments away from extreme heat, cold and humidity. Never leave your instrument in a car because heat can damage the instrument very quickly.
- Do not allow others to play your personal instrument.
- Only allow qualified string instrument technicians (a luthier) to attempt repairs.
- Make sure that your instrument case is labeled with your name and phone number.

E. USE AND CARE OF BOOKS AND SHEET MUSIC: Printed music is the textbook of the orchestra program and is a major expense for the department. A typical five-minute composition averages in cost between \$45.00 and \$100.00. All sheet music will be provided to the student free of charge, however, if music is lost or is damaged, there may be a charge to replace the music. To avoid charges for lost or damaged music, students must take care of all assigned and/or checked-out music.

- Write your name (in pencil) on each piece of music.
- Do not fold, tear, or otherwise mutilate music.
- Do not make excessive marks on music. Write on music with a black pencil only.

F. MUSIC LIBRARY: The school's music library consists of arrangements, transcriptions, and original works. Here are some guidelines concerning the music library:

- Only the official librarians are allowed to pull music from the orchestra library. Others are allowed only with the director's permission.
- Students will be assigned a folder for the use of storing music. The student will be responsible for returning all class orchestra music and folders that have been assigned. Failure to do so may result in a replacement charge to the student.

G. UNIFORM & DRESS CODE: The orchestra has adopted a standardized uniform. It is a matter of group pride, which is pertinent and integral towards successful orchestral performances, for musicians to present themselves in a manner of professionalism, unity and dignity. Students who are not in the required uniform or out of dress code will forfeit the privilege of performing; a secondary assignment will be required in lieu of performing. Out of the high sense of respect for the music and the audience, the orchestra dress code for performances will include the following:

Formal Concert Orchestra Uniform ("Concert Black")

Male: Black Tuxedo, Black Shirt, Black Tie (or Bowtie), Black Socks & Shoes.

Female: Full-length long-sleeve black dress; black hose or socks; closed-toed black dress shoes. Long hair should be worn up.

Notes For All Students:

Acceptable items: Stud earrings, fine or thin necklace with a single pendant, only one fine/thin precious metal bracelet, studs and cufflinks for the formal shirt are optional.

Unacceptable items: Watches, large dangling or hoop earrings of any size, large flashy jewelry, plastic tube bracelets, flip-flops, two-toned shoes, white socks, sneakers (including black sneakers), or boots.

Please see the end of this document for Alpharetta High School's Common Syllabus updated grading policies.

V. CITIZENSHIP

A. THE IMPORTANCE OF A POSITIVE ATTITUDE: The single factor that will determine the success of any individual or organization is attitude. It takes intense dedication to reach goals. Students should learn to discipline themselves with daily practice. These practice sessions should include a warm-up regimen, as well as solos and the whittling of their parts. Ideally, the "right attitude" accompanies sincerity, concentration, and dedication as the basic foundation. Such an attitude makes an artistic performance inevitable. It is a privilege to belong to an orchestra. Make the most of it in every rehearsal and performance.

B. THE IMPORTANCE OF DISCIPLINE: Due to the nature of the organization, discipline within the orchestra must be firm. Orchestra students and their parents must be willing to accept the ideals, principles, and rules of the organization. Orchestra members are constantly on display. Therefore, each member must always be aware of the importance of good behavior. Any misconduct casts a negative light on the orchestra, as well as Alpharetta High School and the Fulton County Schools. This may very well undo the hard work and good effort of many loyal students. In addition, misconduct reflects on your community, and parents/guardians. Discipline yourself so you can be the best possible young man or woman.

C. THE IMPORTANCE OF PRIDE: I would like us to take pride in everything we do, not just in orchestra, but also in all of our classes and actions. If you are going to do something, do it with PRIDE!

D. THE IMPORTANCE OF COURTESY: Courtesy to teachers, school employees, parents, chaperones, other students, and guests is very important. Each of us should strive to be considerate of all others. Discourtesy and rudeness will result in disciplinary action as set forth in the Alpharetta HS Student Handbook. Serious violations may result in dismissal from the orchestra.

VI. MISCELLANEOUS (BUT IMPORTANT) ITEMS

A. PRIVATE LESSONS: Although not required, private lessons give students the opportunity to get more individualized attention on their instrument. With individualized instruction, a student can build the technical skills necessary to become a very proficient performer both as a soloist and orchestral player. It's amazing to see what students can accomplish with private lessons! Every student in the AHS Orchestra program is encouraged to take advantage of the opportunity to study privately.

B. ORCHESTRA WEBSITE: The orchestra has a website (www.alpharettaorchestra.org) that was created to increase teacher/student/parent communication and interaction. On the site will be important information for parents, students, and visitors. In addition, there will be media files available to download and playback on your own technology that will assist with student practice and listening skills.

C. FINANCES AND FUNDRAISING: Each year, the orchestra requires funding for new music, instruments, repairs, classroom supplies, and teaching aids. Only a small portion of the orchestra budget is funded by the school and the remaining portion of our budget comes in the form of fund-raising and donations. For this reason, it is very essential that each of the members “pull their own weight” financially by helping with the fund-raising activities.

Fundraisers are designed to assist the orchestra to purchase new instruments, repair old instruments, purchase music and educational materials. This money may also be used to raise money for special events and trips. Keep in mind that fundraising is not mandatory, but it is highly encouraged since everyone uses school equipment and supplies. Monetary donations are welcome and are fully tax deductible. When paying money to the orchestra, please write the student’s name on each check and envelope.

For trips, students may be assigned individual accounts for record keeping purposes only. There will be no refunds of monies raised or paid, at any time during the year, should a student not continue in the orchestra program. Upon graduation or transfer to another school, monies remaining in a student’s account will be transferred into the general orchestra fund. The only exception made would be a “sibling” transfer from one child’s account to another.

D. ADDITIONAL PERFORMANCE OPPORTUNITIES

Solo and Ensemble Festival: Every year, orchestra members have the option to participate in a Solo and Ensemble Adjudicated Event. These events provide individual assessment and motivation for many students to perform as a soloist or in a small ensemble. They will perform for a judge, be evaluated on their performance, and receive written comments. Students who are interested in being involved in this activity are strongly encouraged to have the additional help of a private teacher. More information will be made available closer to the event.

District Honors Orchestra: Each year, students may audition to participate in the Honors Orchestra. This event brings together our most advanced students from all FCS high schools to rehearse and perform challenging music. Additional rehearsals and performances are required. A special guest clinician works with the honors orchestra each year. More information will be made available closer to the event.

GMEA All-State Orchestra: The All-State Orchestra is formed each year to bring the top musicians from the state together to perform a concert. There are four high school orchestras: 9/10 string and full orchestra and the 11/12 string and full orchestra. Auditions are held in two rounds, usually October and January, and the event takes place in March.

Youth Orchestras: The Atlanta metro area is fortunate to have a plethora of additional performing opportunities available for string students. Please see the orchestra website for a list of area youth orchestras.

E. ORCHESTRA TRIPS: These are fun opportunities for students to enjoy both educational and recreational activities outside the classroom. ***These trips are considered a privilege and must be earned by the students.*** Students who wish to participate in this activity must have a good academic and citizenship record in every class. **Students must earn a 2.0 minimum GPA (with no F's) and satisfactory behavior EVERY GRADING PERIOD.** Students who do not meet these requirements, have shown a record of discipline problems, have missed any required orchestra activities or owe money to the orchestra will not be allowed to participate. **All decisions about the**

trip are at the discretion of the director. Trips are usually scheduled in the spring and must pass school board approval.

VII. PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

CONGRATULATIONS!!

Your decision to provide your child with a quality education in music is an investment in your child's future. In making it possible for your child to continue to play a musical instrument, you are providing the opportunity for self-expression, creativity and achievement. Numerous studies indicate that parental attitude, support and involvement are important factors in a child's ability to successfully learn to play and enjoy music. Like any skill, interest counts far more than talent. With strong support from you, playing music will become a natural part of your child's life.

A. BENEFITS

For the student, music participation enhances: Problem solving, Goal-Setting, Physical Coordination, Self-confidence and esteem, Poise, Teamwork, Self-expression, Memory skills, Concentration, and much more!

For the family, music participation offers opportunities for shared family experiences, including: musical event attendance, family music making, performing for, and with, family and friends, learning about the lives of composers and the cultural heritage of many civilizations, a sense of accomplishment and pride for the entire family.

B. HOW YOU FIT IN

Always keep in mind that your support is an essential element in your child's success with music study.

Schedule Practice Times: Music achievement requires effort *over a period of time.* The time in orchestra rehearsal is limited. New concepts learned at school need daily personal practice time by your child at home in order for these new skills to be developed. You can help your child by:

- Providing a quiet place in which to practice
- Remaining nearby during practice times as often as possible
- Scheduling a consistent daily time for practice
- Praising your child's efforts and achievements.

C. TO MAINTAIN YOUR CHILD'S INTEREST

- Talk with your child if his or her interest begins to decline
- Increase your enthusiasm and involvement in your child's playing

D. WHAT TO DO: To give your child the best possible support, you should:

- Remind your child to bring instrument and music to orchestra class
- Encourage your child to play for family and friends
- Offer compliments and encouragement regularly
- Expose your child to a wide variety of music, including concerts and recitals
- Encourage your child to talk with you about classes
- Make sure your child's instrument is always well maintained
- Listen to your child practice, and acknowledge improvement

- Help your child build a personal music library
- Make certain that your child is on time for all school rehearsals and performances
- Encourage your child to make a commitment to his or her music studies
- If at all possible, obtain private lessons with a qualified instructor
- Get to know your child's teacher

E. WHAT TO AVOID

- Using practice as a punishment
- Insisting your child play for others when he/she doesn't want to
- Ridiculing or making fun of mistakes or less-than-perfect playing

F. PARENT VOLUNTEERS and CHAPERONES: The orchestra is always looking for parents to help with fundraisers, concerts, receptions, video recording, etc. If you are available to volunteer, please contact Mr. Hood (hoodj3@fultonschools.org)

G. ALPHARETTA HIGH SCHOOL ORCHESTRA ASSOCIATION (AHSOA): The

AHS Orchestra Association is the parent booster organization for the AHS Raider Orchestras. The goal and function of this group is for all parents to help with Orchestra functions and to supply needed capital for functions, equipment and events that are not financed by the school system. There are only 3 meetings per year, so it is crucial to attend each meeting as the Orchestras cannot function without this vital support from the parents. There are enough students and parents in this orchestra program that all events can be covered if everyone participates in one event. This may only be 3 - 4 hours or less of your time once all year.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION:

****Financial Obligations**

The AHS Student Participation Fee (SPF) is \$125 for the year payable to AHSOA. The participation fees help to cover the cost of the program that is not covered by Fulton County. A complete itemized list of all financial obligations will be made available and will be discussed in detail at the first AHSOA meeting of the year. If a family experiences difficulty meeting orchestra financial obligations such as the SPF, the Director should be notified either in person or by email. A payment plan may be made available to ensure that all students who wish to participate in the AHS Orchestra will have the opportunity to do so. Please note that the Director must be notified to set up a financial plan. Cases will be treated with strict confidence. Parents, if we don't hear from you, we will expect payments when they are due.

FUNDRAISER PROFIT DISTRIBUTION

Group Profit

Fundraiser profit will go to benefit the AHS Orchestra for capital improvement projects to benefit the majority of the students in the orchestra or for a community service project. All students are expected to participate as these fundraisers go to benefit all students in the orchestra. If a fundraiser is designated for a particular trip, then the proceeds will be distributed evenly among all participants going on the trip.

Very Important: Should there ever be any doubt in your mind about any phase of your child's participation in the orchestra program, I am always willing to talk with you. Feel free to call, set up a meeting, or email anytime!

VIII. CALENDAR OF EVENTS

The Alpharetta Orchestras will perform several times throughout the school year. Events may be added, and dates are subject to change. I will notify you well in advance if there are changes to the calendar.

The orchestra calendar is subject to change. If there are changes, you will be notified and all updates will be shown on the orchestra website.

Please mark your calendars now so that you reserve these important concert dates and other deadlines.

<http://www.alpharettaorchestra.org/calendar/>

Students and parents should sign and return a hard copy of the AHSO handbook acknowledgement form.

In addition to this hand book, please reference the Alpharetta High School Common Syllabus and grading policies.