

James Island Strings
Rebecca Runge, Director

August 19, 2009

Dear Parents:

The Orchestra Handbook has been prepared for you and your child to provide information about the String Orchestra Department on James Island.

Please read the handbook carefully, as it includes most of the policies governing the orchestra program.

Should you have any questions, please feel free to call me. My phone number is 762-2784 ext.400 or at home 556-2667.

Once you have read the handbook, you and your child should sign the bottom portion of this letter and return it to me by the next strings class.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Runge

Detach here and return to Mrs. Runge

I have received and read the James Island Orchestra Handbook and fully understand its contents.

Parent's signature: _____

Parent's email address: _____

Student's signature: _____

Date: _____

James Island Strings

HANDBOOK

Materials

- A. Instrument and accessories (rosin, shoulder pad, rock stop or belt, combination lock)
- B. Pencils
- C. Music folder with music
- D. Method Book

Purpose

The purpose of the String Orchestra is to give students an understanding of and an appreciation for music. Playing in the orchestra will develop a mental discipline that will aid the student in achieving success in other fields, too.

Orchestra students are expected to develop a sense of pride and respect for the String Orchestra Department. This sense of pride and respect will bring about the “group spirit” necessary for the continued success of the String Orchestra Department on James Island.

Personal Obligations

Members of the String Orchestra Department are expected to do more than simply play their instruments well. The following are a few thoughts that will help students develop a greater sense of responsibility and discipline.

1. Always be a little ahead of schedule. This will allow you to get your thoughts together so the task at hand has a better chance of being carried out properly.
2. Take suggestions and criticism in the proper spirit. It is important to remember that orchestra is a group activity as well as an individual activity. Your mistakes hurt not only you, but affect the entire ensemble.
3. Keep track of all your equipment (instrument, folder, pencil, etc.) and have it at the right place at the right time.
4. Constantly try to improve. Make up your mind to learn something new each day.
5. Follow directions the first time.
6. Each student is expected to practice a minimum of 30 minutes, 5 times a week.

Attendance

Attendance at all performances and rehearsals, both during and outside school hours, is required. Absence or tardiness mars the effectiveness of the orchestra and cannot be tolerated without a permitted excuse. If an orchestra member holds up or misses a rehearsal or public performance, they have hurt not only themselves, but also the entire ensemble. An unexcused absence could result in the student receiving a lower grade for the nine-week period.

The only excused absences are: personal illness, death in the immediate family, and certain school conflicts (to be determined by the principal and orchestra director). In all cases, the director must be notified as far in advance as possible. All excuses must be in writing.

Concert Attire

Students are expected to wear a uniform. Girls should wear a white blouse with a black skirt or pants. (Skirts need to be knee length or longer.) Boys should wear a white dress shirt with black pants. Students are expected to wear black dress shoes. **NO SNEAKERS!**

(We also have strings t-shirts for more casual concerts and field trips. Cost for the t-shirt is \$6.)

Rehearsal Rules

1. Always have your instrument, music, and a pencil when you come to rehearsal.
2. The orchestra will always warm up as a group. When told to do so, take your instrument out immediately to avoid wasting valuable time.
3. DO NOT talk or play when the director is talking. Raise your hand if you have a question or comment.
4. When the director gives a cut-off, stop immediately.
5. When asked to make a change in the music, mark it. Do not assume you will remember this change.

*Inappropriate behavior will result in a phone call to parents, detention, referral, or removal from Strings.

School Rules

Students are expected to follow the rules of PBS.

Grading Procedure:

Each nine weeks, students will receive grades in the following areas:

Daily participation: Students will automatically receive 10 points per day for attending class with their instruments, music, and pencils.

Playing tests: Periodically, students will be required to perform assigned sections from class repertoire for a grade. Areas to be considered will be intonation, tone quality, correct bowings, dynamics, and appropriate phrasing. **Certain playing tests will determine chair placement.**

Daily Participation	450 points
Playing Tests	50 points (per test)
Concerts	100 points (per concert)
Rehearsals	100 points
Projects & Special Assignments	100 points
Total	800 points

9 weeks grade = Points earned divided by Total Points

Extra Credit

Extra Credit may be earned by:

1. Attending outside concerts and writing a brief critique on the performance.
2. Participating in other music organizations (Charleston County Prep or Honors Orchestra)
3. Staying after school to help the director.
4. Making posters or flyers for upcoming concerts.
5. Tutoring a younger or less experienced student after school.
6. Auditioning for Region Orchestra.
7. Taking private lessons on a regular basis.
8. Participating in Solo and Ensemble Festival.

Communication to Parents and Students

1. Strings Websites (www.jamesislandmusic.org) and (www.ccsdstrings.org)
2. E-Chalk
3. Newsletter
4. Letters and Concert Notices

Local Instrument Purchase and Repair Locations

1. Music and Arts, 975 Savannah Hwy, Chas. SC, 843-852-0900
2. The Instrument Doc (Chris Bluemel), Savannah Hwy, Chas. SC, 843-276-9239
3. Pecknel, 1660 Sam Rittenberg Blvd, Chas. SC, 843-766-7660

Websites to Purchase Instruments

1. Southwest Strings (www.scstrings.com)
2. Shar Music (www.sharmusic.com)

***DO NOT** recommend purchasing instruments from Internet sites such as Ebay or Craigslist. You really can't tell what you are getting until after purchasing. Any instrument for \$200 or less is usually of **VERY** poor quality. A poor quality instrument means that it will not stay in tune, breaks easily, is difficult to play and has a weak sound.*