

Battlefield High School – Orchestra Handbook
2017 – 2018 Academic Year
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I. Introduction

I am excited to welcome you to orchestra at Battlefield High School. We are entering the fourteenth year of our award-winning program. Last year, our accolades included straight superior ratings at district assessment from the Battlefield Concert and Philharmonia Orchestras, a gold rating in the Heritage Competition in Chicago, and the highest number of participating PWCS students in All-County, Senior Regional, and All-State Honors Orchestras.

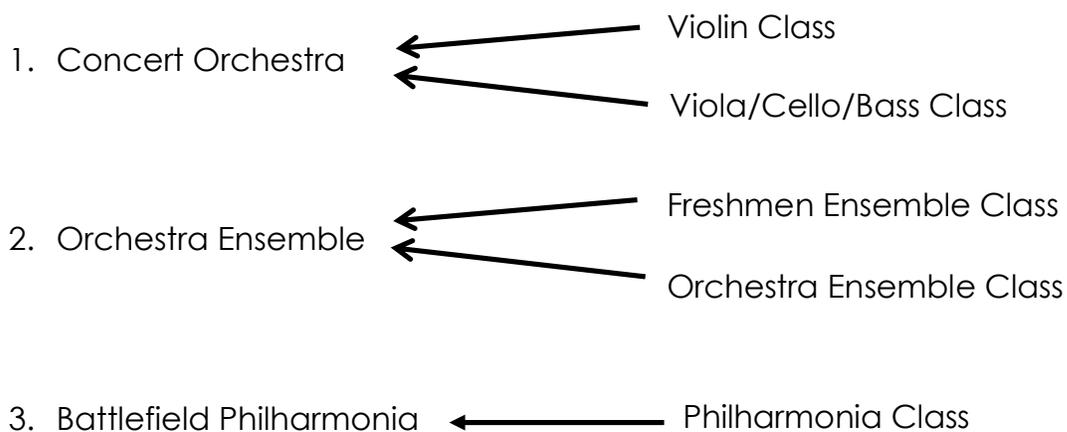


The purpose of this handbook is to provide you all of the information you need to know about the day-to-day operations of our orchestra program. With over 170 participating students, it is really important everybody does his/her part to make our experience in orchestra positive and successful. Therefore, *it imperative that you read this handbook carefully.*

II. Class Placement

**For your information only, this section is not required reading.*

Battlefield High School has three orchestras that are split into five classes. In order from beginning to most advanced, these orchestras and classes are:



Ensemble placement occurs by audition at the end of the preceding academic year. Therefore, most students performed an audition to determine their placement for the current school year in April of 2017.

Ensemble placement auditions for next school year will take place in April of 2018. Your placement is determined based upon your live performance audition and upon what I see on a daily basis during class (participation, behavior, commitment, and orchestra "citizenship"). The general criteria for placement into each performing ensemble is listed below:

Violin Class: This course is open to all Battlefield students. At least one year of experience in a middle school strings class is strongly recommended, but not required. Instruction is geared primarily toward incoming freshmen, with some sophomores, juniors, and seniors also enrolling. This class follows the same curriculum as the Viola/Cello/Bass Class, but focuses exclusively on violin.

Viola/Cello/Bass Class: This course is open to all Battlefield students. At least one year of experience in a middle school strings class is strongly recommended, but not required. Instruction is geared primarily toward incoming freshmen, with some sophomores, juniors, and seniors also enrolling. This class follows the same curriculum as the Violin Class, but focuses exclusively on viola/cello/bass.

Freshmen Ensemble: Entrance requirements are the same as Orchestra Ensemble (below), except that this class is only open to freshmen. It is designed to provide additional and necessary instructional supports to younger students while allowing them to pursue more advanced repertoire.

Orchestra Ensemble: The student exhibits perfect playing position. Students are able to play a two-octave scale perfectly in tune. Students are able to produce a beautiful tone across multiple dynamic levels. Students are able to sight-read basic passages in third position (violins, violas, and basses) or fourth position (cellos) with attention to key signature and accidentals. The student displays impeccable commitment to achieving the highest standards of musical performance. The student is equally committed to the success of his/her peers and the orchestra as a whole. This class is only open to sophomores, juniors, and seniors.

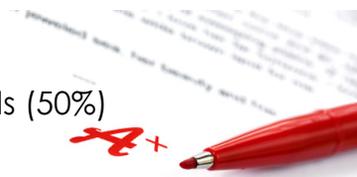
Battlefield Philharmonia: The student exhibits perfect playing position. Students are able to play a three-octave scale perfectly in tune. Students are able to produce a beautiful, confident, and leading sound across multiple dynamic levels. Students are able to sight-read VBODA grade 3 literature. Students display exemplary character, commitment to individual and group success, and the unrelenting desire to achieve a world-class performance standard. Instruction is geared primarily toward sophomores, juniors, and seniors, with some freshmen also enrolling.

The Battlefield Philharmonia is an honors class with a significant number of required activities that take place outside of the regular school day.

III. Grading

All students earn a grade in orchestra. There are three general categories used for grading:

1. Daily Participation Grades/After-School Rehearsals (50%)
2. Playing Quizzes and Tests (30%)
3. Concert Attendance (20%)



Daily Participation Grades/After-School Rehearsals: Students earn a grade each class/rehearsal based upon the quality of their participation. Below is the rubric used to assess student participation:

Grade	Criteria
A (100%)	1. The student has brought all required materials to class. 2. The student is following all classroom rules/behavior expectations. 3. The student is fully participating. 4. The student has practiced assigned music or exercises. 5. The student is present and on-time.
C (70%)	1. The student did not bring all required materials to each class. OR 2. The student is not following all class rules/expectations. OR 3. The student is not fully participating. OR 4. The student has not practiced assigned music/exercises. OR 5. The student is late to class or returning from break. OR 6. Student use of restroom during class (students should ask to use the restroom at the beginning of class or during break). OR 6. Any combination of the above.
F (0%)	The student is not participating during the majority of class time AND/OR does not respond/correct behavior issues when addressed.

Playing Quizzes/Tests:

Playing **quizzes** take place regularly (about every other week). They assess a wide variety of skills, including scales, passages from concert music, playing position, etc. Students will always be informed of a playing quiz in advance.

Playing **tests** occur before each concert. Students are assessed on their ability to perform their concert music as well as scales and sight-reading exercises from the current unit. This test is also used to determine the seating order in the concert.

Students may retake any playing quiz for a better grade by contacting the instructor **via email** before the end of the nine weeks. If a student wishes to retake a playing test, he/she must do so before the concert. Students may have to stay before or after school in order to retake a playing quiz/test.

On occasion, a student will be REQUIRED to retake a playing quiz/test. If a retake is required, no credit will be awarded until a retake has been completed (otherwise the grade converts to a "zero"). It is the responsibility of the student to ensure the retake is completed on time. Students who do not complete a retake may not be able to participate in the concert.

IV. Concert Attendance

Because orchestra is a performance-based class, we primarily learn through performing our instruments. **Division policy mandates students must be present for all concerts. There are no excused absences except in the most extreme circumstances.**



If you should need to request an excused absence from a concert, you must adhere to the following guidelines:

1. Your request must come from your parent/guardian and must be in writing. Email is strongly preferred (saundez@pwcs.edu).
2. **Your request must precede the concert. Except in emergency situations, requests for excused absences received after the concert will not be considered.**
3. A make-up assignment will be required if an excused absence is granted.

Please note that an excused absence from school does not automatically excuse a student from the concert. Please ensure you follow the preceding guidelines in order to be eligible for a make-up assignment, when applicable.

V. After-School Rehearsals

A complete listing of after school rehearsals is attached to this handbook and available online. Students will receive a minimum of two-weeks notice on any changes to these dates. After-school rehearsals are mandatory and graded. Excused absences can be requested if a major conflict presents itself. To request an excused absence from an after school rehearsal:

1. **Email** the orchestra director as soon as you are aware of the conflict. Your request must be submitted via email at least 48 hours before the beginning of the rehearsal (except in cases of illness/family emergency).
2. The orchestra director will reply to your email to approve your request. Your request is not approved until you have received confirmation from the orchestra director. In all cases, documentation will be required.
3. In the event of illness/family emergency, you must have an excused absence or early dismissal from school on the day of the rehearsal.
4. The director reserves the right to deny a request for an excused absence.

VI. Required Materials

Materials you must bring to every class:

1. A pencil (on your music stand).
2. All of your music in a music folder.
3. Your instrument and bow.*
4. A shoulder rest (vln/vla only).
5. Rosin and a polishing cloth.
6. A tuner and metronome.**



*Cellos/Basses may use a school owned instrument during class.

**There is a free app available on most smartphones. A metronome and tuner can be borrowed from the school if you do not have access to a phone.

Additional materials:

1. The required concert attire (available for rent through the school).
2. A rock stop (cellos and basses must bring this to every concert).

***NOTE:** CELLOS AND BASSES MUST HAVE AN INSTRUMENT AT HOME FOR PRACTICE ASSIGNMENTS AND TO BRING TO CONCERTS.

If you have trouble obtaining these items, please do not hesitate to contact me at saundez@pwcs.edu. **Financial assistance is available for students in need.**

VII. Instrument Rentals and Storage

Cellos and basses are provided to all students for in-class use (rental fee applies). However, students must obtain a cello/bass for home and concert use. A small quantity can be rented through the school on a first-come, first-serve basis. Instruments are also available for rent through local shops.

Violins and violas are only available to rent for students with an exceptional financial need. They can also be borrowed for short term use (one month or less). Please contact me at saundez@pwcs.edu.

Instrument storage at Battlefield is provided in room 1416 (attached to the orchestra room). This allows students a place to leave their instrument during the school day so they do not have to carry it from class to class. While we do everything we can to ensure the safety of these instruments, **please understand that this storage is provided at your own risk.** We cannot accept responsibility for lost, stolen, or damaged instruments.

IX. Behavior and Conduct Expectations

Students are expected to adhere to the student code of conduct and uphold all classroom expectations. Failure to comply with any given instruction can result in a reduction of the participation grade, contact with the parent/guardian, and/or permanent removal from the performing ensemble.

*****Students are required to check the class SLMS page daily! You are responsible for all information posted to that page!*****

XI. Orchestra Rehearsal and Concert Dates

A list of required dates is included at the end of this packet. Please mark these dates in your calendar as they are mandatory and graded.



X. Financial Assistance Statement

Each year, we reserve a percentage of our funds to assist families who need assistance in covering required orchestra expenses. To learn more, please contact me at saundez@pwcs.edu.

XI. Orchestra Cords

Graduating seniors are eligible to earn a cord in orchestra when the following criteria have been met*:

1. Student has enrolled in orchestra in high school for three years.
2. Student has logged a total of 3 orchestra service hours each year for both their junior and senior years (6 hours total).†
3. Student has earned an overall grade of "B" or higher each year in orchestra.
4. Student participated in Solo and Ensemble festival their senior year.

*****IMPORTANT***:** Students are required to submit a documentation form for all service hours within one week of the activity. The director is no longer able to log hours automatically on the student's behalf. Students who fail to submit a documentation form within the specified time frame are not eligible to receive service hours for the activity.

2017-18SY Orchestra Commitment Agreement

**All orchestra families must complete and return!*

- 1.) I verify that I have read all required sections of the orchestra handbook and agree to follow the policies set forth.
- 2.) I understand that all concerts and after-school rehearsals are required, graded events. I have marked all of the concert dates in my personal calendar/agenda. **Regrettably, a parent note **does not automatically constitute an excused absence from a concert or rehearsal (please see concert attendance policy).***
- 3.) I understand that the instrument storage area is provided as a convenience to students at their own risk. While it is our priority to keep the room secure, Battlefield High School cannot accept liability for lost or stolen instruments.
- 4.) I understand the grading policy and realize that when a retake is required on a playing test, the score will convert to a “zero” until the retake is completed. If the retake is not completed, the score remains a “zero”.
- 5.) I understand that failure to comply with the PWCS student code of conduct may result in removal from the performing ensemble and alternate work will be assigned.

*If you have any questions or concerns about the information in this handbook, please reach out to me at saundez@pwcs.edu before submitting your commitment agreement. I am happy to help in any way I can.

Student Name **(MUST PRINT FOR CREDIT)**: _____

Student Signature: _____

Parent Signature: _____

I look forward to a wonderful year together in orchestra – I’m so glad each of you has joined us for another exciting season 😊