

Carson Middle School

2019-20 Orchestra Handbook



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Carson Middle School
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ORCHESTRA CALENDAR 2019-20

All Orchestra students are expected to be at scheduled performances – it is a large percentage of the grade as it is a culminating assessment, much like a test in your academic classes. More dates will be added as they become available and as needed throughout the year. Students and parents will be given plenty of notice of any changes to the schedule printed below via e-mail, paperwork given to students in class, and the school newspaper. Call time for concerts is 15-30 minutes before the performance time, unless otherwise indicated. Members of CMS Beginning participate only in the quarterly concerts and the Young Ensembles Festival.

After-school rehearsals may be required for some of our classes which perform together.

Tuesday, Oct. 15 – Fall Concert – 6:30pm, Community Center

Tuesday, Dec. 17 – Holiday Concert – 6:30pm, Community Center

Jan. 16-18 – Elko/Carson City Middle School Honor Orchestra – Location TBA

Saturday, Feb. 1 – Northern NV Solo & Ensemble Festival – Mendive Middle School, Reno

Tuesday, Mar. 10 – “Festival” Concert – 6:30pm, Community Center

TBA – Washoe County Orchestra Festival -- During the day, UNR

Wednesday, Apr. 22 – Northern Zone NMEA Middle School Band/Orchestra Festival – During the day, Location TBA

Thursday, Apr. 30 – Young Ensembles Festival (Beginners only) – Location TBA

TBA – MS Combined Trip – Vallejo, CA

Tuesday, May 26 – Spring Concert – 6:30pm, Community Center

*Other opportunities to perform may arise as the year progresses. I will keep you all informed by e-mail!

** After school rehearsals will be required to coordinate Carson Middle and Eagle Valley Middle Orchestras for all or most Community Center performances.

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

Welcome to Carson Middle School's Orchestra program! I'm excited to be your director and to include you in building a tradition of excellence. Playing music is one of the most wonderful pursuits one can undertake. It builds not only valuable skills that enrich the mind and lives of all who experience it, but it also builds lasting friendships and interpersonal bonds. Music is the language of the world, and as you become more fluent in that language the world becomes a better place. This handbook outlines our program and provides information on policies and procedures we must all follow in order to achieve our potential.

My goal is to provide you with a well-rounded music education you will value in your future, with opportunities for successful performances so you'll be motivated to continue in music, and with opportunities to share your music expertise and experiences with others at concerts, festivals, competitions, and community functions. I hope to introduce you to good string orchestra literature of the past and present in a variety of styles and genres, and to cultivate excellence by maintaining high expectations, all within a structured and comfortable classroom that allows for all this musical growth to occur.

I want you to understand the nuts and bolts so you can become independent musicians! You will have opportunities to participate in music as a performer, listener and creator. You will become fluent in the complex language we call music and be able to read and communicate it to others. In your rehearsals and performances, you'll experience a musical joy that you'll never forget. I believe you'll be a better person in all ways and healthier emotionally, mentally, socially, physically and spiritually because you took this class. Expect the best from yourselves and from me!

You will learn a lot about me as the year progresses, but here are a few things you should know right away. I love music and working with students! I like it when students make mistakes I can hear because that's something tangible we can fix. If I can't hear it, I can't fix it, so play with confidence! Motivated students excite me! I want all of you to audition for honor orchestra or a solo, or become a leader in your section and go the extra mile that will set you apart from the crowd. I think you will find our class and making music together is both fun and rewarding. This class is about **US** and the **MUSIC** we make **TOGETHER**.

Please contact me with any questions or concerns you may have.

Brian Fox
bfox@carson.k12.nv.us

STRINGS CLASSES AT CMS

CMS currently offers a Beginning and an Intermediate/Advanced strings class.

Beginning Orchestra is offered to students of any grade who have never played a stringed instrument or to students who want a more thorough review of the skills and concepts they learned last year. We focus on developing basic instrumental technique, note and rhythm reading skills and musicality. Students will perform at all the major concerts.

Advanced Orchestra is for students who are continuing to develop instrumental technique and reading skills. Musical expression and independence are developed through learning and performing literature for string orchestra and a large amount of literature is learned. Advanced Orchestra will perform at all the major concerts, and advanced students may perform more often.

Students with prior musical experience will be given opportunities to work beyond the level of their class or on enriching skills. A wide variety of music styles and genres will be studied. My Beginning Orchestra classes learn the same music and are combined into one orchestra for performances, necessitating extra rehearsals which are held shortly before concerts. There will be after-school rehearsals for this purpose, and students are required to attend to participate in the performances. Higher-level Beginning students will be given the opportunity to go the extra mile and perform in small ensembles at concerts.

Orchestra students need to practice their instruments outside of class – at home, during lunch or enrichment, or after school – in order to be successful. **Students are required to practice 15 minutes a day, five days a week - outside of class.** Studies have shown that just a few minutes every day is the most effective practice schedule.

COURSE EXPECTATIONS

In order for us to achieve our potential as a performing group, each student must abide by the following rules, which are mostly just common sense. You'll get more done and be very proud of your accomplishments.

- You are expected to be in class on time.
- You will have three minutes to get your necessary materials (instrument, music stand, music and pencil) and get to your assigned seat.
- It may be necessary to set up chair and stands prior to class or to clean up chairs afterward. All students are expected to help with setup.
- **Food of any kind is not allowed in the classroom – this is a school policy to prevent severe, life-threatening allergic reactions.** Students may carry a water bottle.
- No gum – this is a school rule.
- No cell phone use during class – this is also a school rule.
- Be respectful to your director, peers and school property at all times. Take care of your materials, treat others as you'd like them to treat you, use school-appropriate language.
- Respect the instruments and the property of others – never, ever get into another student's instrument without their permission. String instruments are fragile and easily broken or

damaged. If you damage another student's instrument, you will be required to pay for its repair or replacement.

- Do not leave your seat without permission.
- Pay attention in class – if you're not actively participating, it will be reflected in your participation grade, your work ethic grade and, if appropriate, your behavior grade.
- Pick up after yourself! Do not leave music, class materials or other personal belongings in the orchestra room. Items left in class will be placed in the school lost and found. You will enjoy a clean room much more!
- You are expected to keep up by practicing outside of class at home or at school. If you need help with your music, ask for help. **Students who don't learn the music because they didn't practice may not be able to perform with their class, at Dr. Fox's discretion.**

MAKE-UP WORK POLICY

If you are absent and the absence has been approved by Dr. Fox, you will be required to make up the work in order to receive a grade. It is YOUR responsibility to request make-up work within 5 days after receiving the assignment. Failure to turn in make-up work will result in a zero for that particular assignment.

MISSED PERFORMANCE POLICY

Culminating performances in music are given the same weight as final exams in other classes. Students who know they will miss a performance must notify the teacher two weeks prior to the scheduled absence and provide a handwritten note from a parent or guardian stating the reason for the absence, date of the absence, and a contact phone number for each absence at the next regular class session. Absences will be excused at the discretion of the orchestra director.

Excused absences from performances include personal illness (advance notice is appreciated, when possible), death in the family, and vacations *with parents*. Excused absences may also apply to direct conflicts with other school activities, at the discretion of the teacher, but **will not** be granted for absences from major performances, such as the fall, winter, and spring concerts. Dates are posted as soon as they become available and students and parents are expected to make arrangements for the student's transportation and participation. Note that this year we will have to have some after-school rehearsals when necessary to combine classes prior to performances. These are mandatory and students who miss them may not participate in the performance.

Some examples of ***unexcused absences*** include observation at other school activities, vacations without parents or without giving a two-week notice, extracurricular sports and other activities, or volunteer activities with other clubs or organizations.

If a student misses a performance, they have the opportunity to complete a make-up report. Excused absences can earn up to 90% on the assignment; unexcused absences can earn up to 50%. Absences from mandatory after-school rehearsals cannot be made up, but they can be excused so that the absence does not count against the student's grade.

CONCERT ATTIRE

Concert attire is a white button-down shirt or white blouse, black slacks or long black skirt, black socks and shoes (closed toe), and a black tie (optional) for boys. Wearing inappropriate concert attire will result in the student being excluded from that performance or a lower performance grade, at Dr. Fox's sole discretion.

CONCERT ETIQUETTE

Students will be graded on Concert Etiquette at all performances, which means that students must not talk or make noises while in the audience. They must remain in their seats unless called to come backstage and prepare. There will be a volunteer in the concert hall who observes and enforces concert etiquette. All offenders will be reported to Dr. Fox.

TRAVEL

The orchestras will travel for performances and festivals. It is the YOUR responsibility to keep up in your other classes, and to get homework from other teachers prior to leaving on a field trip. You must demonstrate excellent citizenship (grade of B or better) in order to be eligible to participate in a field trip.

TEXTS AND MATERIALS

Beginning Orchestra:

- Sound Innovations for String Orchestra – Book 1, by Phillips, Boonshaft, and Sheldon, published by Alfred Music. (\$8)
- Various performance pieces for String Orchestra

Advanced Orchestra:

- Sound Innovations for String Orchestra – Book 2 by Phillips, Boonshaft, and Sheldon, published by Alfred Music. (\$8)
- Various performance pieces for String Orchestra

Books are available for purchase during class. Money is due to Dr. Fox by Friday, August 23, 2019.

Materials & Supply List

Students will need to provide the following materials and supplies:

Instrument: Students need an instrument in good working condition, equipped with four fine tuners (this applies to violin, viola, and cello). Please consult Dr. Fox before purchasing an instrument. There are some less expensive instruments that may not be worth the money. Orchestra teachers call them “Violin-Shaped Objects” for a reason! Please also do not ever attempt to work on your child’s instrument. Only experienced String professionals should repair instruments—this includes tuning the instrument!

The *Carson City Symphony* owns some rental instruments. Availability is limited and preference is given first to students who have greatest financial need, then to 8th grade and 7th grade students (in that order) who were in orchestra the previous year. The instruments are available for a monthly fee. Instruments must be kept in good working condition. If substantial damage occurs, parents will be contacted to arrange for repair and payment. Please see the rental agreement form for additional information. Renting a Symphony instrument is a privilege, not a right, and students who misuse Symphony instruments will lose that privilege.

Students who rent Symphony instruments are expected to purchase their own replacement strings, if needed, and rosin.

Instruments are also available to rent from the *Carson City School District* on a limited basis. See Dr. Fox for details.

Supplies:

The following supplies are covered under the \$25 lab fee, due Friday, August 23rd

1. **Strings** may need to be replaced during the year. It is a good idea to keep a set on hand. At a minimum, extra E and A strings for violins, A and D strings for violas, and extra A and D strings for cellos.
2. **Bow rosin**
3. **Cleaning cloth**
4. **Sponge shoulder rest**
5. **“Rock stop” for cellos and basses**

The following items are not covered under the lab fee and should be purchased or provided

6. **Standard shoulder rest**
7. **Folding music stand** for at-home practice, \$8-12
8. Tuner (recommended for at home tuning), about \$18
9. Metronome (strongly recommended), about \$18

GRADING

Your grade will be based on the following:

- 35% Daily participation and attendance (50 points per week)
- 30% Concert participation and attendance (100 points per concert)
- 30% Assessments (Playing Tests)

- 5% Homework/Practice record

Daily Participation and Attendance

You will earn 50 points per week for class participation. This includes coming to class and being ready on time, having your music, other materials and pencil, and your effort and attention in class. Classroom behavior affects not only your progress in class, but the progress and success of everyone else in the orchestra, and it will therefore be reflected in your grades for behavior and work ethic as well. Grades for attending after school rehearsals, if required, are posted under the participation grade.

Concert Participation and Attendance Grading

You will receive 100 points for each performance. Grades will be based on:

- Proper concert attire (have proper uniform for event and look professional)
- Proper performance etiquette (professionalism and being in assigned place at all times)
- Punctuality/attendance (arrive at the assigned time and stay for the ENTIRE concert)
- Clean-up after the concert (if we all pitch in, it will go fast!)

Attendance at performances is mandatory. **After-school rehearsals may be required** and will be posted as far in advance as possible. It is critical to maintain good grades and citizenship in other classes in order to participate in performances which take place during the school day. Dates will be posted as soon as they are available and may be subject to change (we are not always in control of the scheduling of events).

Assessment, Tests and Homework

In-class evaluations, observations, written quizzes or homework, and taped or in-class performance assessments are included in this grade. Where appropriate, performance assessment grades will be based largely on demonstrating improvement. Opening sponge activities at the start of class may be used for assessment purposes from time to time to demonstrate understanding of the material being covered.

Homework/Practice records

Students are required to practice 15 minutes per day every day and to document their practice weekly by filling out a form on the CCSD Orchestras website: <http://ccsd-orchestras.weebly.com>. The practice/homework grade is posted on Infinite Campus under the overall grade (homework/practice, 5%).

PROGRESSIVE DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES

Inappropriate classroom behavior affects ALL students in the class and the success of the orchestra. Unacceptable behavior will be subject to correction using a system of progressive disciplinary actions including, but not limited to, removal from the class.

1. First offense: Students will receive a verbal warning.
2. Second offense: The student's daily class participation points will be lowered, the student may be assigned a detention or other consequence, and a minor offense may be entered on Infinite Campus.
3. Third offense: The student will lose participation points and may be assigned a lunch detention or other consequence, and the parent will be notified. A minor offense will be entered on Infinite Campus.
4. Fourth offense: The student will receive a minor offense in Infinite Campus; if it is the student's 4th offense, it becomes a major offense to be handled by the school administration.

Bullying and/or harassment or reports bullying/harassment of other students will result in mandatory immediate referral to the office and/or school police in accordance with school policy. Please see the new policy, effective this school year, regarding bullying on the CCSD website.

Local Music Shops

Play Your Own Music – Vince Gates – 885-7529 – 112 E. John St. Carson City, NV 89706

Absolute Music – Dave Warriner; Jon Bentley - 852-2637 – www.absolutemusiconline.com - 8175 S. Virginia St. #600, Reno, NV 89511 – info@absolutemusiconline.com; absolutemusic@sbcglobal.net

Blue Note B’s Horn Shop – Craig Dill – 453-9219 – www.bnbinstruments.com - 1155 W. 4th St, #118 Reno, NV 89503

JamPro Music Factory – (775) 800-1772 – www.jampromusicfactory.com - 9300 Prototype Dr. Reno, NV 89521

Questions you may wish to ask when renting an instrument:

- What portion of the rental payment applies toward the purchase?
- Is it a month-to-month contract or long term? What happens if you return it before (1) it's fully paid for or (2) if the term is not up?
- Would you be able to upgrade or “upsized” the instrument later?
- What is the procedure for repairs while you are renting? Are the repairs done “in house” or is the instrument sent elsewhere for repair? Do they loan you another instrument while they have it for repair?
- What is your responsibility for repairs? Which types of damage and repairs are covered?
- Is anything else included? For example, do they also include a music stand, book, rosin, shoulder rest, rock stop or other supplies with the instrument?
- Does the instrument have four fine tuners in good condition?

STUDENT AND PARENT AGREEMENT

The CCSD Orchestras Student-Parent Handbook is located at <http://ccsd-orchestras.weebly.com>. Please read the handbook carefully. It is very important that you and your child understand the policies and procedures for our orchestra program. With your commitment and cooperation, we can have a great year.

Each student and his/her parent or guardian must sign the statement below, indicating you understand and will abide by these rules and policies. ***Parents must provide transportation to and from performances that take place outside of school hours, e.g., Fall, Winter, "Festival," & Spring Concerts.***

Important updates and other information will be communicated via e-mail and in class. It is critical that I have an accurate e-mail address for you to ensure you receive them.

Thank you for your cooperation, and I look forward to a truly outstanding year in orchestra!

Please sign and return this page by **Friday, August 23, 2019** (10 points homework credit). **In addition to the \$8 method book fee, there is a \$25 lab fee associated with this class. The total amount due per student is \$33. Please make check payable to your school.**

Student Name: _____ School/Class: _____

Student Signature: _____ (STUDENTS MUST SIGN, TOO)

Parent/Legal Guardian Name: _____

Parent/Legal Guardian Signature: _____

Parent/Legal Guardian Phone Number: _____

Parent/Legal Guardian E-mail Address (required): _____

PARENT VOLUNTEER INFORMATION

Our music program is made possible by the contributions and support of our parent volunteers. We appreciate any help you may be able to provide. Please check any of the following areas in which you are willing to help. Thank you!!!

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chaperone at festivals and on trips | <input type="checkbox"/> Fund raising—organizing and assisting |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Concert program design and printing | <input type="checkbox"/> Grant Writing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Provide food for concert receptions or for student rewards following a concert | <input type="checkbox"/> Photographer (photos) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Parent recruitment for events—calling for volunteers | <input type="checkbox"/> Video photographer |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Sorry, I can't volunteer, but I will help financially. |