

Metcalf Orchestra Handbook

2016-17

Margot Ehrlich- Orchestra Director, ISU Lab Schools

mehrli@ilstu.edu or cell text is usually the best way to reach me quickly

Phones: cell: **309-830-0243**, Metcalf: 309-438-3828 (am), U-High: 309-438-7342 (pm)

Our Orchestra Website: www.Labschoolorchestras.weebly.com

Please sign up for Remind 101. For guardians and parents of students in all grades.

(I have agreed not to text anyone under 13yrs of age). Instructions:

Step 1 for all: Enter this number in your cell phone: **81010**

Step 2, by grade:

- 1) For 5th Grade, text: **@b36b9**
- 2) For 6th Grade, text: **@7k87g**
- 3) For 7th/8th Grades text: **@43ck6b**

Students, we will go over this handbook in class, but also **please review it together with a parent**. Parents and students are responsible for knowing and understanding the contents.

Orchestra meets 3 days a week for 35 minutes. Daily practice at home is what it takes to build the skills we are learning in class. The amount of practice varies depending upon level of study and student quality of practice and motivation. **Science tells us** that “*Skill is insulation that wraps neural circuits and grows according to certain signals.*” Slow precise motions with an emphasis on technique and deep mental engagement build skill. Repetition and engagement stimulate the signals that create the myelin that builds skill. This is true for mental and physical skills. (From “The Talent Code”, by Daniel Coyle.)

Communication

1. Students, please use Metcalf **Gmail**.
2. Please join **Remind 101** (directions above) for reminders about performances or deadlines.
3. I will communicate details of assessments by:
 - a. Speaking to students,
 - b. Written assessments in Gmail
 - c. Attaching comments in **StandardsScore**
 - d. Newsletter if grade has one
 - e. Emails and/or calls to parents.
 - f. Remind 101. Adults can sign up for reminders. I will use it sparingly.
4. Contact me with your ideas and/or concerns at mehrli@ilstu.edu.

Tips that will help us learn and perform our best TOGETHER

1. Come prepared for class each day with instrument and materials.
2. Make a habit of checking for and completing assignments posted in Google Classroom.
3. Get to class on time. You may need to walk quickly, especially if the class prior to Orchestra is across the building. Since you may not have time to stop at your locker, plan to drop what you need off in the Orchestra room before school.
4. Unpack your instrument quickly and quietly.
5. Be seated, check the markerboard for instructions, and prepared the day's music at the start of class.
6. Tune to the best of your ability. You may bring bottled water to class. No other food.
7. Maintain your instrument. Keep it clean and in good working condition.
8. Be polite to teachers and supportive to classmates.

Grading

1. Grading will measure progress toward mastery goals. Individual growth, self-responsibility, responsiveness to formative assessments (i.e. fixing problems), and creative, active participation are expected.
2. Performing in our scheduled concerts is a form of Summative Assessment, and is required. Be sure to add concert dates to the family calendar. I must be informed of conflicts, in writing, in advance (except unavoidable emergencies.) Merits of conflicts and grade impact will be determined on an individual basis.
3. **Students will be assessed for personal growth**, not in comparison with one another.
4. Attentive, respectful rehearsal behavior, and personal responsibility for supplies, are essential to the functioning of our ensemble. Instruments are to go to and from school the same day as class. Regular practice is necessary. Like an organism, we need all our parts working together for optimal functioning. Initially just 5 or 10 minutes, 30 minutes or more for more advanced levels.
5. A rehearsal is, by nature, full of on the spot assessments. Students need to mark music with tips to remember and drill during home practice time. Practice for progress. Write down questions to ask me if obstacles arise at home. Make goals for your next practice session.
6. Expect a "3" for a student who practices regularly, and is usually on target in skill building, creative efforts and rehearsal behaviors, but with some inconsistencies in skills and/or behavior. A "4" will indicate mastery. A "Mastery" level assessment will include musical skills, but also leadership skills, such as personal self discipline, positive attitude, engagement in rehearsal and responsibility.

Music and Folder Responsibility

All music issued to students should be kept in the **appropriate folder** and maintained in good condition. An accordian file may be a good solution for many since it can hold books and loose sheets. Students will be issued ONE COPY of music. If it is lost, misplaced, or forgotten, it will

be the student's own responsibility to replace that music. (Perhaps borrow a copy from a classmate to make a copy.) Music folder checks will be held periodically.

Practice

Good quality practice results in good progress. Remember that skill is myelin that insulates neuronal connections through practice. Studies also show that young musicians are increasingly more successful when parents are involved with them during practice time.

Practice should not be forced beyond the normal firmness required for all homework, but it should be included in the family schedule and encouraged. **Do** notice how practice improves performance. Acknowledgement of effort and kind words go a long way.

Instrument Storage

Each student will be assigned a storage shelf in the classroom. Instruments are to be stored in the classroom during the day only, not overnight. Instruments chronically left at school overnight show low effort and responsibility, part of a student's grade. Students are not to be stored in the hallway outside the classroom. The ISU Fire Marshall does not permit it.

Fingernails

Students will need **short/cut fingernails** in order to play a string instrument. Long nails get in the way of playing a bit like high heels would encumber a football player. (Got the image?) You just can't play well with them. If a student decides to get fake nails for a special weekend occasion, they MUST be removed by the following Monday. Fingernail clippers will be provided to a student if nails are too long.

Concert Attire

White shirt*, black pants or skirt, dark shoes (dark socks.) Skirts must drape over the knee when seated unless black leggings are included. *Some groups decide, together, that they prefer to wear all black, in recognition of professional attire.

Attend Concerts

It is inspiring to all to attend live performances. ISU and IWU offer free or low cost concerts orchestra at the CPA and the BCPA. Further afield, U of I and Chicago are wonderful destinations for great music. Come and see the UHS Orchestra perform at U-High for free!

Etiquette when you perform

1. Be on time and attentive during the warm-up and the concert.
2. Stay for the entire concert (This is part of the student's grade.)
3. Help move equipment back to its proper place at the end of the concert. (Stands and chairs, music and instruments to the orchestra room, etc.)
4. Wear appropriate concert attire.

Etiquette when you are in the audience

1. Stay seated during performance unless it is an emergency.
2. Refrain from talking during the performance. This is an important courtesy to performers and to others in the audience.
3. Turn off all cell phones. Texting also disturbs fellow audience members.
4. Clap *energetically* for the performers, in recognition of their efforts.

Illinois Music Educators District Festival (IMEA)

To participate in the IMEA District Festival, you must be selected by audition on the required music. Auditions take place every year on Columbus Day, at BHS. The festival is in November on the Saturday before Thanksgiving, at Nazarene Olivette University. We will transport students to the festival. **The music is available now.** It is a great honor and a big boost to students to be selected for District Orchestra. Motivated students in grades 7 and 8 are encouraged to participate! Students who are selected must attend all the rehearsals and the final performance (all happen on the Saturday before Thanksgiving.). I can be available for scheduled IMEA orchestra music tutorials. Please contact me if interested.

Private Lessons

One on one individual instruction is one of the key ingredients to the most successful orchestra programs in the country. Even though private study is not a requirement for participation in orchestra, private lessons are an important factor in the success of the student. It is a **common misconception** that private lessons are for students who have “fallen behind” on their instrument. While private lessons will definitely benefit those students, private lessons encourage and help those students who are advancing rapidly on their instrument even more. ISU, IWU, and The Music Shoppe are among the places that offer private instruction with emphasis on the young learner. There are also teachers who teach out of their homes, and lessons are available through Metcalf’s own Music Academy which is staffed by ISU Music Education Majors. (Please contact Aundrea Wells, our General Music teacher.)

School Loaned Instruments

School instruments may be loaned at a low cost to those families in need of assistance. If you have a need, please contact Ms. Ehrlich. At the end of the school year, all school owned instruments are turned in for inventory check, cleaning, and repair. Serious damage to the instrument while in the possession of that student or family is the financial responsibility of that party. Please act responsibly with your instrument!

Orchestra Conduct Policy

Behaviors that interfere with rehearsals such as tardiness, irresponsibility and distracting actions will be handled this way:

1. Warning
2. Delayed departure to next class to discuss fixing the problem
3. Detention and a teacher conversation with a parent
4. Conference with administrator, student, teacher and parent.

You will find the calendar for your child's grade below. Please be sure to enter the dates in your family calendar for your student's correct grade in school!

5th Grade 2016-2017 Items in bold are required events. Early Starts highly encouraged.

9/14/2016	7:15-7:50am	Wed	Early Start*	5th and 6th	Classroom (Rm 222)
9/26/2017	6:30-7:30pm	Mon	Music Parent Night	5th	Classroom (Rm 222)
10/26/2016	7:15-7:50am	Wed	Early Start*	5th,6th	Classroom
11/2/2016	6:30pm	Wed	Solo Recital #1**	5th-8th	Hayden
11/9/2016	7:15-7:50am	Wed.	Early Start*	5th and 6th	Classroom
11/14/2016	7:30am	Fri	Orch to assembly	5th	Hayden
12/6/2016	6:30pm	Tues	5/6 Concert	5th/6th	Hayden
12/14/2016	7:15-7:50am	Wed	Early Start*	5th and 6th	Classroom
1/25/2017	7:15-7:50am	Wed	Early Start*	5th and 6th	Classroom
2/7/2017	6:30pm	Tues	Solo Recital #2**	5th-8th	Hayden
2/22/2017	7:15-7:50am	Wed	Early Start*	5th and 6th	Classroom
3/2/2017	6:30pm	Thurs	Orch Parents Night	5th-6th	Hayden
3/22/2017	7:15-7:50am	Wed	Early Start*	5th and 6th	Classroom
4/1/2017	Btw. ~8-11am	Sat	Festival:Solo/Ens.+	5th-8th	Hayden
4/10/2017	7:30am	Mon	Presentation(to 4th gr)	5th	Hayden
4/19/2017	7:15-7:50am	Wed	Early Start*	5th and 6th	Classroom
(4/26-4/28	All Day		5th Gr to Outdoor Ed.	5th)	
5/1/2017	12:25-3pm	Tues	Rehearse w/ UHS	5th-8th	UHS: Stroud
5/8/2017	8-10:00am	Mon	Drop off at UHS	5th-8th	UHS: Stroud
5/15/2017	5:30 Call Time	Mon	Orch Concert 5th-12th		UHS: Stroud

6th Grade 2016-2017 Items in bold are required events. Early Starts highly encouraged.

9/14/2016	7:15-7:50am	Wed	Early Start*	5th and 6th	Classroom (Rm 222)
10/21/2016	7:30am	Fri	Orch to Assembly	6th	Hayden Auditorium
10/24/2016	6:30-7:30pm	Mon	Orch Showcase	6th-8th	Hayden
10/26/2016	7:15-7:50am	Wed	Early Start*	5th,6th	Classroom
11/2/2016	6:30pm	Wed	Solo Recital #1**	5th-8th	Hayden?
11/9/2016	7:15-7:50am	Wed.	Early Start*	5th and 6th	Classroom
12/6/2016	6:30pm	Tues	5/6 Concert	5th/6th	Hayden
12/14/2016	7:15-7:50am	Wed	Early Start*	5th and 6th	Classroom
1/25/2017	7:15-7:50am	Wed	Early Start*	5th and 6th	Classroom
2/7/2017	6:30pm	Tues	Solo Recital #2**	5th-8th	Hayden
2/22/2017	7:15-7:50am	Wed	Early Start*	5th and 6th	Classroom
3/2/2017	6:30pm	Thurs	Orch Parents Night	5th-6th	Classroom
3/22/2017	7:15-7:50am	Wed	Early Start*	5th and 6th	Classroom
4/1/2017	Btw. ~8-11am	Sat	Festival:Solo/Ens.+	5th-8th	Hayden
3/6/2017	7:30am	Fri	Orch to Assembly	6th	Hayden
4/19/2017	7:15-7:50am	Wed	Early Start*	5th and 6th	Classroom
5/1/2017	12:25-3pm	Tues	Rehearse w/ UHS	5th-8th	UHS: Stroud
5/8/2017	8-10:00am	Mon	Drop off at UHS	5th-8th	UHS: Stroud
5/15/2017	5:30 Call Time	Mon	Orch Concert 5th-12th		UHS: Stroud
5/15/2017	6:30	Mon	Orch Concert 5th-12th		UHS: Stroud

7th and 8th Grade Orchestra Calendar 2016-2017. Events in bold are required.

9/19/2016	7:30am Call	Mon	Orch Morning Assembly	7th,8th	Hayden
10/10/2016	~ 8:30- 12:00	Mon	IMEA Auditions (opt.)	7th-12th	BHS
10/6/2016	3:15-4:45pm	Th	IMEA Practice	7th /8th	Classroom
10/21/2016	1:20-3pm	Fri	Mentor trip to UHS	7th/8th	UHS Rm 103
10/24/2016	6:30-7:30pm	Mon	Orch Showcase	6th-8th	Hayden
11/2/2016	6:30pm	Wed	Solo Recital #1	5th-8th	Hayden
11/19/2016	8am to 4:30	Sat	IMEA District Festival (opt.)	7th-12th	Olivette Nazarene
12/13/2016	6:30pm	Tues	7/8 B,C,O Concert	7th/8th	Hayden
2/7/2017	6:30pm	Tues	Solo Recital #2	5th-8th	Hayden
2/17/2017	7:30am call	Mon	7/8 Orch to assembly	7th, 8th	Hayden
3/21/2016	6:30pm	Tues	Orchestra Parent Night	7th/8th	Classroom
4/1/2017	Btw. ~8-11	Sat	Solo/Ensemble	5th-8th	Hayden
4/8/2017	8am-4pm	Sat	Intercity Honor Orch.	7th/8th	BJHS
(4/24/2017	8am and	Mon	Band/Chorus Rehearsal	6th-8th	Stroud-UHS)
(4/24/2017	6:30pm	Mon	Band/Chorus Concert	6th-8th	Stroud)
5/1/2017	12:25-3	Tues	Large grp Orch. rehearsal	5th-8th	Stroud
5/8/2017	8-10:00 am	Fri	Rehearsal at UHS	5th-8th	Stroud
(5/9-5/12 7th Gr. to Outdoor Ed.)					
5/15/2017	5:30	Mon	Orch Concert Call Time	5th-12th	Stroud
5/15/2017	6:30	Mon	Orch Concert	5th-12th	Stroud

*Orchestra “Early Starts” are for 5th and 6th graders and are always on the Wednesday of the week with Metcalf Late Starts- days we lose class time due to the altered schedule. While attendance is not required, it is highly encouraged. This is the time we do the bulk of our free improvisation and composition work, one of our National Standards. The structure of the class is quite different than other days.

**All students will all be required to learn solos. Students will get to perform their solos for the class with piano accompaniment. (Thanks go to the Thake family for their grant to hire a pianist to come into our classes to accompany students!) The evening recitals will showcase students most ready to perform.

+Participation is optional for the Solo and Ensemble *Festival*. All grades may participate. Families must arrange for a piano accompanist, but sharing a pianist is cost effective.

Please complete and return forms below no later than August 30th.

Student Name/Grade	
Student Cell (if you have one.)	
Student Locker #	
Birthday	
Do you know how to submit a self-recording to me in Google Classroom?	
Are you able to record and send from home?	
Guardian #1 Name (preferred)	
Occupation	
Cell	
Email	
Guardian #2 Name	
Occupation	
Cell	
Email	

Signature required on next page.

**ORCHESTRA BOOSTER and PARENT VOLUNTEERS: Can you help?
Please see other side for ways to stay involved and support your student.**

- Orchestra Booster. Help organize volunteers for orchestra related boosting as below.
- Help boost orchestra's visibility and support the efforts of the students with Locker flyers
 - Quarter 1
 - Quarter 2
 - Quarter 3
 - Quarter 4
- Random small Act of Kindness (Do you have an idea?)
- Piano accompanying (occasional)
- Supply treats and/or help organize reception (informal) for Orchestra Parent/Family/Showcase Nights
 - Help transport /Chaperone
 - May 1st, grades 5-8 to UHS for rehearsal for May concert- 12:25- 3pm
 - May 8th, 8am-10
 - Y/N Certified driver of ISU vehicles? (Potentially helpful, *not* necessary.)
 - Coordinate with UHS Booster Parent to organize volunteers for the May concert reception.
 - May 15th, Help with reception:
 - provide food,
 - help set-up,
 - serve or
 - tear-down

Do you have thoughts on other ways you would like to help or participate? Please let me know, and thank you! Your involvement is so important.

We have received a copy of the 2016-2017 Metcalf Orchestra Handbook.

Print Student's Name _____ Signature _____

Print Name Parent/Guardian _____

Signature _____

Please return completed form no later than August 30th.