

Harper's Choice Middle School

**Orchestra
Handbook**



2009-2010



Calendar of Events 2009-2010

Please mark these events on your family calendar.

All mandatory events are noted in bold typeface.

There will be other events that will be announced throughout the year.

September

Mon. 9/21	Back to Music Night, 6:30pm
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November

Tues. 11/3	Wilde Lake String Festival (Chamber Orchestra only) * School day rehearsals (field trip) * Evening concert at Wilde Lake High School, 7:00pm
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December

Mon. 12/7	HCMS Winter Concert, Part 1 (Chamber Orchestra) James Rouse Theater at Wilde Lake High School, 7:00pm
Thurs. 12/17	HCMS Winter Concert, Part 1 (String Orchestra) Cougar Café at Harper's Choice Middle School, 7:00pm

February

Sat. 2/6	Howard County Solo and Ensemble Festival at Mt. Hebron High School (Snow date: Sat. 2/13)
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March

Wed. 3/31	Sweet Serenades
Exact Date TBA	Howard County Orchestra Assessment * ALL Chamber Orchestra students are required to attend this afternoon/evening event.

May

5/3 or 5/4	State Orchestra Festival *possible* (Chamber Orch. Only)
Fri. 5/14	Music Department Hershey Park Trip
Sat. 5/8	State Solo and Ensemble Festival
Wed. 5/19	HCMS Spring Concert, Part 1 (String Orchestra) Cougar Café at Harper's Choice Middle School, 7:00pm

June

Tues. 6/8	HCMS Spring Concert, Part 2 (Chamber Orchestra) James Rouse Theater at Wilde Lake High School, 7:00pm
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Harper's Choice Middle School Orchestras

5450 Beaverkill Road ~ Columbia, Maryland ~ (410) 313-6929

September 8, 2009

Dear Orchestra Students and Families,

Welcome back to a new school year and a special welcome to the new sixth-grade orchestra students and their families! I hope that everyone had an enjoyable and relaxing summer and is ready to jump back into a new school year.

This handbook contains a great deal of important information for both parents and students. *Students should read through the enclosed material with their parents.* At the end you will find two forms that need to be completed and returned **by Friday, September 18, 2009**. PLEASE MAKE SURE YOU RETURN THE SIGNED AGREEMENT TO MRS. MCKAY ONLY. If the student is also in Band or Chorus, you only need to fill out and return ONE information form.

Should you ever have any questions about Orchestra or your student's progress in Orchestra, please feel free to contact me.

Email: amanda_mckay@hcpss.org

Phone: 410-313-6929

Please also check the Orchestra website on a regular basis for class information. The website will have copies of forms sent home throughout the year, should you need to print another copy at home.

http://web.hcpss.org/~Amanda_McKay

In an effort to be more "green", most Orchestra and Booster announcements will be sent home via email or posted on the class website. When filling out the information form at the end of this packet, please print your email address clearly so I have a reliable means of contacting you.

Parents, I look forward to meeting you at Back to Music Night on September 21 at 6:30pm (immediately before Back to School Night) and I look forward to working with you and your musicians this year!

Sincerely,

Amanda McKay
Orchestra Director
Amanda_McKay@hcpss.org

Course Description

The primary emphasis of orchestra classes will be on developing individual playing skills and ensemble skills, and on learning repertoire for concerts and for the Howard County Orchestra Assessment. **Sectionals** will be held on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays. **Rehearsals** will take place during Pack Time on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays.

Student Expectations

As a musician in one of the orchestras, students are expected to:

1. **Be Respectful** to Mrs. McKay, other students and all instruments and music.
2. **Be Responsible** for yourself, your instrument and music, and your actions.
3. **Be Prepared** for class with all of your materials, a positive attitude and willingness to learn.

Performing Groups

Chamber Orchestra: This ensemble will be comprised of 7th and 8th graders and will rehearse every Tuesday, Thursday and Friday during Pack Time.

String Orchestra: This ensemble will be comprised of 6th graders and will rehearse every Tuesday and Thursday during Pack Time.

Rehearsal Seating

Although chair placement in middle school orchestras is not of utmost importance, it is recognized that musical performing ensembles need a set of hierarchical parts to function correctly. Seating placements will be given to all students in both the Chamber Orchestra and String Orchestra based on his or her performing ability, comfort level with difficulty of the part, and the immediate needs of the ensemble. Student placement within a section may change as the student develops his or her musical skills. Mrs. McKay may reassign placements at any time for the good of the ensemble and its members. Mrs. McKay's decisions in this matter are final.

Instrument Storage

INSTRUMENTS MUST BE TAKEN HOME EVERY DAY!

Students may bring their instruments into the Strings room or Ms. Grizio's room at the beginning of the day before they go to homeroom. Students are responsible for making sure that their instrument is in the correct area depending on whether they have sectionals or rehearsal first each day.

Orchestra Assessment

The Howard County Orchestra Assessment is an afternoon and evening event at Marriott's Ridge High School in which every 7th and 8th grade student must participate. Parents and students will be notified as soon as HCMS has been assigned a specific date to attend. **Please do not schedule any activities for the afternoon and evening on the given date.**

Sectional Classes and Rehearsals

ALL STUDENTS MUST ATTEND ALL SECTIONALS AND ALL REHEARSALS

Orchestra is a graded academic class, where participation is required on a regular basis. Students will be pulled out of their regular classes once a week on a rotating schedule to attend one 45 minute sectional class a week. This schedule has been designed so that students only miss each of their academic classes once a quarter. This schedule has been designed to accommodate both students and teachers. All teachers are aware that orchestra students are to leave their classes to attend sectional classes without penalty and students are responsible for making up any missed work. **Students are responsible for telling their teacher that they have sectionals BEFORE coming to sectionals.**

Pack Time Rehearsal time is valuable and limited. Make-up work for other classes WILL NOT be completed during Pack Time. In order to properly prepare for performances and the assessment, every student must attend EVERY rehearsal. *Please try not to schedule early dismissals during or before rehearsal time.*

The only reason students may miss orchestra sectionals is to take a test or assessment.

If a student must miss sectionals, they

MUST SIGN OUT FROM STRINGS BEFORE THEY MISS CLASS.

If students have not signed-out from sectionals before class they will be marked as unexcused.

Students will be given a copy of the sectional schedule each quarter. Schedules will always be posted on the Strings Room and Health Room doors. Extra copies of the schedule will always be available in the Strings Room. Students have **NO EXCUSE** for not knowing when to come to sectionals.

Required Materials

* Please have all materials by September 18th!

- A correctly sized instrument** in good working condition. *A nametag must be on the instrument case at all times.* Cello and bass students may use school instruments, however the school has limited instruments so this will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.
- Rosin:** you should NEVER scratch your rosin. This will only break it apart and render it useless to you. If you need help getting new rosin started, bring it to school so Mrs. McKay can assist you.
- Soft cloth** for cleaning rosin off of your instrument.
- Shoulder rest** for violins/violas. Kun is the recommended brand, but if you need a suggestion or would like to try a shoulder rest before purchasing one, Mrs. McKay has samples to try.
- Rock stop** for cellos/basses.
- 2 Pencils** should be kept in the case at all times. **NO PENS!!**
- Music folder** with all music provided by Mrs. McKay.
- Method book or Technique book:**
 - String Orchestra: Essential Elements 2000, book 2
 - Chamber Orchestra: Essential Technique 2000, book 3
- Notebook:** Students will need a composition book or spiral notebook to use for journal entries. NO binders with loose-leaf paper. Students may reuse their notebooks from last year.
- Music stand** for home practice.
- Metronome and Chromatic Tuner** for home practice. Korg makes several models for less than \$20. All students will be taught how to tune their own instrument and a tuner at home will help students to do this accurately, thus making their home practice sessions more productive.

String Instrument Supply Resources

The following stores are recommended places to rent or buy instruments, take instruments for repairs and purchase strings and accessories.

DO NOT buy inexpensive instruments at wholesale club type stores (BJs, Costco) or online auction sites (eBay). They are usually inferior and are sometimes completely unusable. If a price seems too good to be true, there is probably a good reason for it. The best place to get a musical instrument is from a music store! The stores that are marked with * specialize in string instruments.

Buying an instrument is an important and sometimes difficult purchase. If you are in need of assistance in choosing an instrument or are unsure about the quality of an instrument, please feel free to contact me at amanda_mckay@hcpss.org. I am happy to help you find an instrument that will best suit your student!

<p>* Gales' Violin Shop 10013 Rhode Island Ave. College Park, MD 301-474-4300 www.gailesviolin.com</p>	<p>* Potter's Violin Shop 4706 Highland Avenue Bethesda, MD 20814 Dalton Potter – 301-652-7070 www.pottersviolins.com</p>	<p>* Perrin & Associates 1 E. Lexington Street, Ste 401 Baltimore, MD 21202 410-539-0043 www.perrinviolins.com</p>
<p>* Wood Bridge Music Shop 5809 Clarksville Square Dr. Clarksville, MD 21229 443-535-9677 www.woodbridgemusic.com</p>	<p>Music & Arts Centers 11200 Scaggsville Rd., Unit 111 Laurel, MD 20723 240-568-0600 www.musicarts.com</p>	<p>Music & Arts Center 9210 Baltimore National Pike Ellicott City, MD 21042 410-461-1844 www.musicarts.com</p>

<p>Online String Supply Stores *Strings, tuners, accessories tend to be cheaper from these online stores</p>	<p>Shar Music www.sharmusic.com 1-800-248-SHAR</p>	<p>Southwest Strings www.swstrings.com 1-800-528-3430</p>
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Concert Dress

Having a uniform concert dress will give the ensembles a professional and classy appearance. The goal of a concert is to showcase the group as a whole and visual distractions take away from the performance. The concert dress for all Harper's Choice musicians will be as follows:

Boys: black dress pants, black dress shoes, black socks, white collared dress shirt.

Girls: black skirt (at least knee length) or black dress pants, skin colored nylons, black dress shoes, white collared shirt (at least 3/4 length sleeves).

Concert Attendance

As a member of the orchestra, each student is a valuable part of the ensemble and the ensemble cannot exist without each of its members. Therefore it is crucial that all members perform at all concerts and performances. By concert time students will have put forth a great deal of effort into individual practice and ensemble rehearsal. Concert dates are scheduled at the beginning of the academic year and every effort is taken to ensure that parents are informed of concert dates so that planned absences can be scheduled around concerts.

Howard County Public Schools recognizes the following reasons for an excused absence: 1) Severe illness, 2) Death in the family, 3) Court appearance, 4) Religious Observance. If an absence is to be excused, students and parents are responsible for notifying Mrs. McKay **in writing** as soon as they know they will be unable to perform. An alternative assignment will be given to those students who do not perform.

Unexcused absences from performances will result in the quarter grade being lower one letter grade.

Students are expected to stay for the duration of each concert. Although it is strongly discouraged, if for any reason the student has to leave prior to the conclusion of the performance, **written notice** must be given to Mrs. McKay at least one day before the performance.

Grading Policy

1. **Daily Participation: 50%** - Each student will receive 5 points for each period that they come to sectionals or rehearsal with all of their materials. Students will lose points from their daily grade if they do not have all of the required materials or if Mrs. McKay feels that their behavior or attitude is not positively contributing to the learning environment of the classroom. Students will lose all 5 points for each unexcused absence from class.
2. **Practice Charts: 10%** - Students are required to practice at home daily. Practice charts will be checked weekly and must be signed by a parent or guardian to receive credit. Honesty is expected from all students when filling out the practice charts.
3. **Performance Assessments: 30%** - Students will be given playing quizzes and tests each quarter to assess preparedness and progress. Unannounced quizzes will be given as Mrs. McKay sees appropriate. Consistent "C" work or below on performance assessments is unacceptable. Students who receive a "C" or lower on assessments will be asked to come in for extra help and/or retest until a "B" is achieved.
4. **In-class assignments: 10%** - These assignments will be in the form of worksheets, written quizzes and journal entries.

Extra Credit

Students can earn extra credit by attending any musical performance (does not have to be a classical music performance). In order to receive credit, students must bring in a program or ticket stub from the concert attended and a short paragraph on the performance that they attended. (Ask Mrs. McKay for specifics.) Students can find a list of upcoming performances in the Strings Room.

Private Lessons

Although it is not required, it is strongly encouraged for students to take private lessons. Many students thoroughly enjoy taking private lessons and the one-on-one private instruction can help to further a student's progress immensely. Below is a list of recommended private teachers in the area. A more extensive list is available in the Strings room.

Kathryn Schatz	Violin	410-715-1008
Rosemary Lather	Violin	410-531-6890
Ronald Mutchnik	Violin	410-461-0618
Patrick Walls	Violin	410-799-7517
Sheng Wang	Violin	443-801-8811
Trish Wyatt	Violin	410-599-8120
Bonnie Zeitler	Violin	410-635-6839
Joan Bob	Violin	410-484-5648

Bonnie Zeitler	Viola	410-635-6839
Alice Young	Viola	410-532-3649
Julius Wirth	Viola	410-265-1030
Joan Bob	Viola	410-484-5648
Phyllis Freeman	Viola	301-631-0526

Katherine Barrett	Cello	410-467-5647
Benjamin Myers	Cello	410-715-3506
Fay Rosinsky	Cello	410-531-7078
Cindy Rosenberg	Cello	410-489-4434

Kevin George	Bass	310-313-9366
Colin O'Bryan	Bass	410-499-1776
Matthew Boggs	Bass	443-340-2973

Private lessons are also available at the following locations:

Howard County Community College Music Institute	410-772-4297
Woodbridge Music Shop	443-535-9677
Music and Arts Center (Ellicott City)	410-461-1844
Music and Arts Center (Laurel)	240-568-0600
Peabody Preparatory	410-659-8100 ext. 1130

Sweet Serenades

This event is a showcase of the music department students sponsored by the Harper's Choice Music Boosters. It is an evening for our musicians to demonstrate their skills in small ensembles or solo formats. The evening provides the music in an intimate cabaret setting, complete with delicious desserts and coffee. In addition, the Boosters and its community sponsors hold a hugely successful silent "basket" auction throughout the evening, which adds to the fun.

This year's Sweet Serenades will be held on Wednesday, March 31, 2010. Students who wish to participate will have the chance to audition for the music faculty in early March.

HCMS Orchestra Handbook Agreement Form

Please return this form to Mrs. McKay and have all class supplies by:

Friday, September 18, 2009.

Student's Name _____

Parent's Name _____

Student's Agreement

By signing this form I am verifying that I have read the HCMS Orchestra Handbook, understand the expectations and agree to follow the policies that Mrs. McKay has established.

STUDENT'S SIGNATURE

Parent's Agreement

By signing this form I am verifying that I have read and discussed the HCMS Orchestra Handbook with my son/daughter, understand the expectations, and have reviewed the calendar and recorded the dates on the family calendar.

____ I give permission for Mrs. McKay to include pictures of my child on the Orchestra website.

____ I would prefer my student's picture to be excluded from the Orchestra website.

PARENT/GUARDIAN'S SIGNATURE

This agreement form must be returned to Mrs. McKay!

*** If you are also in Chorus or Band, you only need
to fill out one information sheet
(on the reverse side of this agreement).**