

Orchestra Handbook
Casteel High School



2023-2024

Concerts: September 14, December 7, March 7, and May 2

Casteel High School Orchestra Handbook

Teacher: Victoria Choin

Room: Orchestra

Ways to Communicate

E-mail: E-mail is the best way to communicate with me. You can email me with any questions you have at choin.victoria@cusd80.com

Remind: Remind 101 is a great tool that I use to send out announcements. To join remind, please download the app and use the following codes to join for your specific orchestra class.

Cadet: Send a text to 81010 with this message @dhk77b

Concert: Send a text to 81010 with this message @793fhh

Symphonic: Send a text to 81010 with this message @c27g428

Chamber: Send a text to 81010 with this message @gg4eg7

Class Contracts

Students and parents are required to read, sign and return the inserted contracts.

- Orchestra contract
 - This contract is to make certain that both students and parents are aware of the responsibilities involved in being part of the Casteel orchestra and have read this handbook.
- Performance Schedule
 - By signing off on the Orchestra Contract, you are aware of the dates of performances both at school and off-site.
- Media Release
 - The Casteel Orchestras have both Instagram and Twitter pages. By signing the media release, you consent to having your student's image on social media. It is not required or promised that student images will be used, but permission is required before using student images. Social media is a great way for the orchestra organization to recruit and interact with the students of Casteel.
- Booster Information
 - Please share your email information with the Casteel Orchestra Boosters so that you can be aware of booster led fundraisers and events during the school year. Also, if you can, please, please, please consider joining the booster club and helping the orchestra program!!

Technique Books

All orchestra students will use supplementary technique books in addition to their regular orchestra music. Students are required to purchase a copy of these books to use in the classroom and at home. These books can be purchased at your local music store or on Amazon.

- **Cadet Orchestra**
 - Essential Elements for Strings Book 2
- **Concert Orchestra**
 - Essential Techniques for Strings Book 3
- **Symphonic Orchestra**
 - Advanced Techniques for Strings

Playing Tests, Challenges and Chair Placements

Playing tests and quizzes will be given several times per quarter. These are simple tests that assess understanding of class materials. Every quarter there will also be a chair test. These chair tests will occur after every concert. Chair tests will determine seating in the orchestra. They are not an indication of how better one plays over another, they are used to place students in the best place for the best balance of sound. Students will have one opportunity to challenge their seating if they do not like their placement.

If your student misses their playing test, quiz, or chair test, they will need to schedule a makeup test with me. For all tests and quizzes, they will have 5 days from when they return to makeup the test. If no makeup occurs within 5 days, a 0 will be placed in the gradebook.

Students will have the opportunity to retake **one** test or quiz throughout the quarter for the chance at a better score.

Playing quizzes are based on 5 categories: Bowing, Rhythm, Technique, Accuracy and Posture. A rubric will be used to grade the tests so that the students can see what areas they need to improve in.

Private Lessons

Private lessons are not a requirement for participating successfully in class. However, if a student is a beginner, or a student has fallen behind, private lessons can be a helpful tool for greater success. For the more advanced students, private lessons can increase

the chances for students to participate in High School Regional and All-State Orchestras; as well as prepare them for the collegiate level. It is highly recommended that students consider taking private lessons. **Students in chamber orchestra should take advantage of private lessons.** Class instruction is critical, but private lessons are invaluable for individualized attention and guidance. Sometimes things slip through the cracks in class (like Johnny not properly placing his pinky), and those small things can be fixed in lessons and improve playing.

Practice Check

Practicing your instrument is considered homework for orchestra class. It is expected that students practice **100 minutes** a week. During class, practice checks may be announced to determine if students are doing their homework, which is like a pop quiz. If it becomes apparent in class that 50% of students are not practicing, then practice logs will be sent home and be required to be signed by parents every week.

Concerts and Performances

Performance Dates:

- September 14- Fall Concert
- December 7- Winter Concert
- March 7- Pops Concert
- May 2- Spring Concert

Field Trips and other dates to remember:

- October 19- Fall Orchestra Festival (**Chamber Only**)
- October 26- CUSD Secondary Orchestra Festival (**Concert and Chamber Only**)
- March 5- Area Concert Festival (**Concert, Symphonic, and Chamber**)
- March TBA- Middle School Orchestra Festival (**Cadet Only**)
- April/May 2023- State Competition- Date TBA
- May 6- CUSD Cadet Clinic (**Cadet Only**)
- January 20- HS Solo and Ensemble***
- January 26 and 27- AMEA High School Regional Orchestra Auditions***
- February 10- JH Solo and Ensemble***
- February 16-17- AMEA High School Regional Orchestra Festival****
- March 23- AMEA Junior High All-State Orchestra Festival***

More information to come on all AMEA events. These are outside honor orchestras and competitions that are great opportunities for your students to perform higher level music and meet students from across Arizona.

ALL students in Chamber are expected to audition for AMEA regionals. If they make it they are REQUIRED to attend. Please check your calendars now and inform Miss Choin if there is a conflict.

School Concerts

All performances are mandatory and are part of the student's orchestra grade. If an unavoidable conflict arises, a parent must notify Miss Choin in writing at least 3 weeks prior to the concert. If the reason for the absence is qualified, the director will assign a makeup assignment that will substitute for the student's absent grade. The student will receive a zero if he/she is unexcused and does not attend a performance without proper notification.

Festivals

Festivals are scored competitions in which the students are evaluated as a group by other well established educators and conductors from across the state and the country. The groups also get the opportunity to perform in front of other schools and listen to other schools in the area perform. These festivals take place during school hours and are fun field trips for the students. **Dates above are subject to change.** You will be sent a letter with a permission slip well before the date.

Performance Attire

It is expected that all Casteel Orchestra students dress well when on stage to reflect student and school pride. Chamber and Symphonic will wear uniforms that will be given to them before the first performance. Chamber and Cadet's attire is listed below.

Cadet and Concert Orchestra

Women: Black dresses with $\frac{3}{4}$ or long sleeves, floor length, with black shoes. Black pants, with black long sleeve shirt. Black socks and shoes. No logos or prints!

Men: Black pants, black shirt, black socks, and black shoes. Please make sure shirt is long sleeved. No logos!

Locks and Lockers

Violin and viola students may check out an instrument locker in the orchestra room if they wish based on availability. There is also some rack space availability for cellos and basses. The lockers are only for the storage of musical instruments and must be kept neat and clean at all times. Failure to follow these rules will result in locker privileges being revoked. The assigned locker is school property and may be accessed at any time. Lockers must remain locked even during class to avoid involuntary displacement of lock by another student, or in case students share a locker with a student in a different class.

The school provides the locks and the lockers.

Lettering

Students will be able to participate and apply for Orchestra Lettering. See Miss Choin for details and application. You **MUST** be in high school to apply for lettering.

School Instrument Check Out

Casteel has a limited number of instruments for student rental. Violinists and violists, it is highly recommended that you rent/own your own instruments. However, please refrain from purchasing Cecilio or Mendini instruments as these are not quality instruments and will actually hurt, rather than help, your student. If you need help finding an instrument to rent/buy please contact Miss Choin.

We only have a limited number of school instruments, and these will be rented out to those students who have no means of having an instrument otherwise first. If there are remaining instruments after this, then we can rent those out.

Currently, we should have enough basses for students to have one bass at home and one at school. For cellos, right now students will need to take their school cello home to practice.

Instrument rental fee is \$80 for the year. This can be paid in the bookstore once the contract has been filled out and signed. Students are responsible for any damage to the instrument while in their possession.

Fundraisers

The Music Department uses several fundraisers to help pay for the purchase of performance and rehearsal equipment, supplies and festival activities (like bus transportation). All students enrolled in orchestra are expected to participate in these FUNdraiser activities since all students benefit from the funds received. The booster club will also have several fundraisers throughout the year to help with student costs of out-of-state trips (HS only).

Classroom Policies

Policies subject to change with notice.

Technology:

With the 1:1 technology initiative, it is the responsibility of the student to bring their fully charged laptop to school every day. Technology is a tool no different than a pencil. Like all school supplies, students are expected to have the supplies needed to learn. Most likely, the orchestra classroom will not be using laptops. Laptops will be used on days there is a substitute teacher.

ALL PHONES MUST STAY IN BACKPACKS OR BE PUT IN THE PHONE POCKET IN THE CLASSROOM. Phones are a distraction to the learning environment and should not be used in the classroom during class time.

Discipline Protocol:

It is the expectation that students hold themselves to high standards. The teacher will address students who are not meeting these expectations. This is the standard progression for typical classroom bad behaviors:

- a warning
- a warning with a phone call
- a Parent-teacher conference
- a referral.

Our goal is to work with families to ensure that all students have a safe and focused learning environment.

Tardy Protocol:

Students are expected to be in their seats when the bell rings and ready to learn. If a student is tardy to class, teachers will follow this process to rectify students being late:

- a warning on their first and second offense.
- the teacher will email / call home.
- Notify Attendance Interventionist and email / call home.
- On the fifth offense, the teacher will refer the student to our Attendance Interventionist, who can work with families and assign Saturday school if necessary.
- The teacher has the option to provide their own lunch detention at their discretion instead of writing a conduct referral.

Absences:

Students who have excused absences have at least one day every day they are absent to make up the work they missed. Excessive absences can result in the loss of a credit for the course.

Grading Categories:

- 20 pts: Weekly Participation. 5 pts per day. No instrument= Loss of all points for the day
- 300 pts: Concert Participation
- 100 pts: Concert Reflection
- 50-100 pts: Playing Quizzes
- 25 pts: Practice Checks
- 10-50 pts: Homework Assignments
- 30 pts: Written Tests
- 100 pts: Final Exam

Per Department Policy, semester grades are calculated according to the 40/40/20 formula.

Letter Grade Distribution: A 90-100% B 80-89% C 70-79% D 60-69% F Below 59%

Food and Drink:

There is no food or drink allowed in the classroom except water.

Tutoring:

If your student is struggling, they can make an appointment with me to get extra help.

Finals:

Finals are not given early. Absent students will receive a zero until they can take the final.