



# Orchestra Handbook 2018-19

## Violin, Viola, Cello (4th, 5th & 6th grade) Bass (5th & 6th grade only)

**Orchestra Website: [beaver\\_orchestra.weebly.com](http://beaver_orchestra.weebly.com)**

**I use EMAIL to communicate important information all year.**

**(Please make sure I have your email address!)**

**Students may BEGIN to play a string instrument in grades 4 - 6.**

**SCHEDULE - LESSONS AND ENSEMBLE REHEARSALS:**

### **4th & 5th Grade:**

- In-school group lesson (usually with like instruments) for 25 minutes, once per week. Lessons are during the MTSS review period (which is 55 minutes) and students will miss only a portion of that period, one time per week.
- A lesson SCHEDULE will be established once registration is complete and will be posted at school and on the orchestra website each week.
- One after school DRESS rehearsal occurs before each concert - you will receive more information via email about the schedule for these.
- The total instructional time (32 lessons) during the school year is 14 hours - which means each 25 minute lesson is really important!
- If your child misses a lesson during the week, they may attend another lesson group as a make-up! Check the schedule.
- Method Book: Sound Innovations, Book 1 (for specific instrument) is provided by the family. Your child will use this book in 4th & 5th grade.

### **6th Grade:**

- 2 full orchestra rehearsals (Day 4 & 5) and 1 group lesson day (either Day 1,2 or 3) - these 3 days are required. The music ensemble elective shares a period with MTSS review period. Students may also take chorus - which meets during the MTSS period on Day 4. Students in chorus will have less orchestra class per week.
- One after school DRESS rehearsal before each concert - you will receive more information.

- Method book: Sound Innovations, Book 2 (for specific instrument) is provided by the school. This book must be **returned** at the end of the school year. If you wish to purchase your own copy you may.

**INSTRUMENTS:** Your child needs an instrument to practice at home. We recommend that you plan to rent an instrument in the first year. CELLISTS and BASSISTS will use a school instrument for lessons, but will need an instrument at home to practice and for concerts. Violinists & Violists will need to bring their instrument to school on their lesson days. Please contact me if you have questions! DO NOT buy an instrument on Amazon, at Walmart, Target, E-Bay, Guitar Center, etc. These instruments are built incorrectly and are very frustrating for your child to try to use. Buy or rent ONLY from a reputable string instrument dealer. **PLEASE HELP your student remember his/her instrument and supplies.**

Rental Options:

Brighton Music Center  
1015 Third Ave.  
New Brighton, PA 15066  
724.843.9380  
[www.brightonmusic.com](http://www.brightonmusic.com)

The Baroque Violin Shop  
[www.baroqueviolinshop.com](http://www.baroqueviolinshop.com)  
Best quality and prices and  
they ship to your home.  
1-866-846-5469  
Includes shoulder rest, method book, music stand.

\*The Beaver school district owns a limited number of instruments that are available for students to borrow. Please contact Mrs. Graham if you are interested. You will be required to sign an instrument loan contract and damage to the instrument, while in your care, is **your** financial responsibility.

**ADDITIONAL SUPPLIES:**

We recognize that playing an instrument can be expensive, however the following items are important and not optional. Your child needs these everyday in order to play properly - we've tried to locate the most inexpensive but effective models. Please make sure they travel to and from school on lesson days!

- Shoulder rest (violins/violas only) - a foam version called "The Perfect Shoulder Rest" may be purchased for \$8.95. Other styles are available also. Try [www.sharmusic.com](http://www.sharmusic.com) or [www.johnsonstring.com](http://www.johnsonstring.com) or the Brighton Music Shop. This is really a necessary item!
- Rock stop (cellos/basses only) - purchase at a music store (around \$6-10)
- soft, clean rag for cleaning the instrument (free!)

- Method Book - Sound Innovations for String Orchestra, Book 1 (blue & white) - for the correct instrument type. (\$9.95)
- Music stand for at home practice area - keep this at home.

## **PRACTICING:**

In the music world practicing is required! Just like homework in Math and English and just like attending practice in sports, musicians are always in training! We train our brains and our bodies - and there is no short cut to time spent on the instrument.

Elementary students are expected to practice for 15 - 20 minutes daily. Your student will have clear instructions from us about WHAT AND HOW to practice in the form of a PRACTICE LOG. Please look for these and sign them to validate their record and to stay in touch with me! Rehearsals and Lessons do not take the place of practicing that day - in fact, those are the important practice days - while the instructions are still "fresh"!

**WEEKLY ASSIGNMENTS** are on the whiteboard in our classroom and will come home on a practice log for every lesson. Your child should ask you to sign it every week. These will also be posted on the orchestra website.

## **EXPECTATIONS FOR PARENTS:**

You may expect...

- your child to need your support and participation daily
- clear communication from the teacher
- joy and frustration - it is all part of the deal and the concerts make it all worthwhile!
- that your child **will** make progress if he/she is practicing
- that **most** children don't practice without being reminded!

We expect you...

- to provide necessary "tools of the trade" See above!
- to provide a quiet, lit space and a REGULAR time for practicing
- to remind your child that YOU expect her/him to practice
- to sign practice logs - only if he/she has done the practicing on the log!
- to contact me if your child is struggling
- to commit to the whole year - that is the minimum time necessary to achieve basic skills on a string instrument
- to enjoy your child's performances! (Bring the camera and relatives!)

## **ENSEMBLE PARTICIPATION:**

CHORUS - students are encouraged to participate in chorus - their development of vocal AND instrumental skills will enhance their overall musicianship. Schedules do not typically conflict. Schedules don't allow us to have student participate in Band and Orchestra. If your child started as a string player, we encourage them to continue with a string instrument.

## **PRIVATE STUDY:**

A list of private teachers in the area who are accepting new students is included in your packet. Please consider making this a part of your child's music education!

## **PERFORMANCES:**

**Elementary students will participate in 3 concerts this year. Preparation for these concerts involves dress rehearsals that will occur after school. The Elementary concerts are mandatory!**

**Please put these dates on your calendar right away:**

**Tuesday, Dec. 18 - Elem. Dress Rehearsal, HS Aud., 3:15 - 5:00 pm**

**Wed., Dec. 19 - Elem. Concert - Band, Chorus & Orch @ HS Aud., 7:00 pm**

**Mon. - Wed., Mar. 11,12,13 - Tri-M Fun Days @ DR 3:15 - 4:30 pm  
(optional)**

**Tuesday, Mar. 19 - Dress rehearsal at DR 3:00 pm - 4:30 pm.**

**Thursday, Mar. 21 - Dutch Ridge Art/Music Show — performance time TBA**

**Monday, May 20 - All-Orchestra Dress Rehearsal, 3:15 - 7:00 pm @ HS**

**Tuesday, May 21 - All-Orchestra Concert, 7:00 pm, HS Auditorium**

## **CONCERT DRESS:**

"Concert Dress" is a tradition for musicians that puts the attention on the music (not on the outfit) and give us a sense of camaraderie and unity by wearing a professional uniform. Getting dressed up also helps musicians remember their best performance manners! We have a collection of concert clothes - please contact me or the school nurse if you would like to borrow from our school "concert closet".

- **GIRLS:** Black dress pants (preferred) or skirt (must be BELOW the knee), a white blouse (must have sleeves) and black dress shoes. Please - no prints!
- **BOYS:** Black dress pants, white dress shirt (or polo), black (or dark) socks and black dress shoes. Please make sure shirts are tucked in.

**Concert Etiquette reminders:**

All of the performing students have worked many hours in preparation for our concerts and they deserve to have an appreciative audience of family, friends and members of other performing ensembles. Please...

- Remain seated during each piece. If you must leave, enter, or re-enter the concert hall, do so during the applause.
- If you are in the hallway, talk softly, because this noise carries into the concert hall.
- Do not talk during the performance
- Please stay for the entire program. One of the best things about performing is do so for a full house. The students appreciate when they can share their performance with their friends, classmates and fellow musicians.
- Remember to turn your cell phones and pagers to silent or vibrate.

**GRADING:**

Elementary string students will receive a progress report that will list the benchmark skills worked on in class. These skills are carefully designed to align with the national and state standards established for music education. They are measurable and are assessed individually and will contribute to the individual student's development. **Please read these carefully and discuss them with your child!**

Thank you for the opportunity to share the joy of music-making with your student. I am looking forward to the year ahead. Please don't hesitate to contact me with any questions or concerns. I look forward to seeing you at our first concert!

**EMAIL COMMUNICATION:**

I use email to communicate important information during the school year. Please **MAKE SURE** you have given me an accurate email address for both parents/guardians, so that you will have schedules and other important information!

Sincerely,  
Mrs. Kristina Graham  
Orchestra Director  
grahamk@basd.k12.pa.us  
724-774-0251 x 1511