

Shamokin Area High School

2020-2021 Symphony Orchestra

Handbook & Syllabus

Welcome

Welcome to the 2020-2021 Shamokin Area Symphony Orchestra! This year will be strange, to say the least, but this handbook will hopefully answer many of the questions you may have, and contains department policies and expectations. I understand that there are a lot of unknowns this year, and I ask that you try to be patient with me as I will try to be patient with you. Please be sure to read completely and carefully.

Facilities

Rehearsals and lessons will take place daily in the rehearsal room (A105). Instrument storage and Mr. H's office are in A123. Students will be assigned shelf/rack spaces for their instruments and cabinet slots for their music. It is expected that students will take care of their shared space, keeping it clean and neat, as well as the equipment in that space. Misuse of the space or equipment can result in the loss of certain privileges as well as appropriate disciplinary action.

Breakfast Policy

Students this year are being asked to eat breakfast in the cafeteria when they first enter school. Students eating breakfast will go to the café when they enter the building, and will eat breakfast there before reporting to homeroom. NO FOOD OR DRINK IS ALLOWED IN THE MUSIC SUITE.

Rehearsal/Sectional Expectations

- Come prepared to rehearsal with all necessary materials (music, instrument, pencil, etc.)
- Gum, food, and drinks are prohibited during rehearsal
- Be attentive, listen to/follow instruction, and avoid excessive talking
- Use proper techniques and apply musical skills to the best of your ability
- KEEP CELL PHONES AWAY; there is a designated spaces for phones in the rehearsal room

Behavior Expectations

As members of the music department, students are expected to maintain certain behavior:

- Serve as positive examples for the rest of the student body
- Cooperate with your classmates and work as a team
- Act respectfully towards fellow students and faculty
- Show respect for property and equipment of others and of the school
- Be responsible and dependable
- Come to rehearsal ready to learn
- Follow through with your commitment to the ensemble year-round

Additionally, smoking or use of any drugs or alcohol is strictly prohibited at any Music Department function. Violations may result in the immediate expulsion of the student from the program and/or the loss of any awards, festival/trip participation, etc. The high school principal will be notified and apply any further disciplinary action required.

Performance Dress

Men

- White button-down dress shirt (long sleeves preferred)
- Solid-colored tie (black or dark colors preferred)
- Black dress slacks (no jeans), socks, and shoes

Please note: Due to concerns of storage and sanitation in regards to COVID, we will NOT be using the music department concert gowns or ties this year.

Elegance and class is an expectation at all levels of performance, from the smallest community groups to world-class performing ensembles. Failure of a student to dress appropriately for concerts WILL affect their concert grade and *may* prevent them from being able to participate in the performance with no chance for a make-up. Please make sure all items of clothing fit well before the concert.

Women

- Black dress pants/floor-length black skirt, with a white OR black top (long sleeves preferred)
- Black dress shoes (heels or flats)

Fundraising

The Senior High Orchestra may occasionally participate in fundraisers. Music programs are expensive to operate, and there are certain costs to be considered. In the event that the orchestra does have a fundraiser, all students should consider participating. The profit from fundraisers can help the orchestra go on trips, repair or replace instruments, or can help ease the many other financial burdens of running a music program. Fundraiser participants should make sure any checks or money orders collected are placed in a sealed envelope clearly labeled with the student's name, the fundraiser, and the amount enclosed. All fundraiser envelopes should be placed in the black box in the band room (A107) before fundraiser deadlines.

Additional Opportunities

Members of the Orchestra who are academically viable have the opportunity to participate in several extra-curricular orchestral activities. Please understand that this year the nature of these opportunities may change at any time. We will see if we are able to have these opportunities, but teachers have currently been directed to not have after-school activities such as clubs this year.

Chamber Orchestra: Where the Orchestra plays large works meant for many players, the Ensemble plays works meant for smaller groups – such as chamber pieces, jazz combos, or quartets. The size and exact instrumentation of the group may vary from year to year, and members will be determined by Mr. H. *Previous members are not guaranteed to be part of the group.*

Concert Orchestra: If you have thought about trying out a different instrument, or just want to help younger musicians learn your instrument consider joining the Concert Orchestra. The Concert Orchestra is an ensemble for grades 7-12 and is intended to be an ensemble experience for beginners and veterans alike.

PMEA festivals: Due to concerns with COVID, festivals this year have unfortunately been indefinitely shut down. However, there will still be PMEA auditions in order to determine placement for future festivals. If you are interested in audition materials, please talk to Mr. H.

Practicing

Rehearsals and lessons are not enough for the orchestra to be the best it can be. Orchestra members are expected to take a certain amount of personal responsibility for learning their music through independent practicing. Students are encouraged to take advantage of study hall time during school and to take home their instruments as often as possible, especially over weekends.

In-school practicing:

For weekly sectionals, please follow the posted sectional schedule on the music suite bulletin board/google class. The school staff receives this schedule every month, and attempting to move times becomes confusing for all involved. Do not ask to move your sectional time.

For extra practice time, students may only come to the music suite during a study hall, and **MUST** have a pass from a music teacher. Getting the 'ok' from another teacher is not acceptable, especially this year. **Only one student will be permitted to use each practice room at a time.** As such, students are indeed allowed to remove masks in the practice rooms, and the rooms will be sanitized after use.

Some practicing tips:

1. Practice in a place where you will not be distracted.
2. Practicing more often for less time will yield better results than practicing less often for more time. (i.e. practicing 20 minutes every day vs. practicing 2 hours every Saturday)
3. Start with clear goals in mind. Do not just play through your music in 'autopilot mode.' Say to yourself, "I will be able play (x) with correct bowing/with better technique/with more accurate rhythm," and then work towards that goal.
4. If you are having difficulty with a certain passage, break it up into chunks and slow it down. If it keeps giving you trouble, move on to something else, but be sure to come back to it.
5. Vary your practice session by practicing several different things. Working on a single passage or even a single piece for half an hour can be hindering and frustrating.
6. Do not practice just the fingerings. Practice things like rhythm, articulation, bowing, dynamics, phrasing, etc. All these aspects are just as important as the notes, if not more so.
7. Practice how you perform! Play with correct technique, proper posture, etc.

Grading Policy

Orchestra grades are tentatively based on the following:

- Daily rehearsal attendance/participation: 5 points (per rehearsal)
- District-required quarterly writing samples: 15 points
- Classroom/Practice assignments: 10-25 points
- Written/Playing tests: 50 points (per test)
- Performances: 100 points (per concert)
- Sectional attendance/participation: 20 points (per lesson)
 - STRINGS ONLY: attend at least 3 of the weekly sectionals each marking period, or complete optional recording assignments

Important Dates

PLEASE NOTE: ALL DATES ARE TENTATIVE AND SUBJECT TO CHANGE UPON CLOSURE

- Choir/Orchestra Fall Performance: Wednesday, November 18, 7:00PM
- Combined Winter Performance: Monday, December 14, 7:00PM
- Spring Orchestra Performance: Monday, May 10, 7:30PM
- Senior High Graduation: Date/Time determined by school year schedule

COVID changes in the classroom

There are a lot of things to consider this year, and while we will be largely working towards our same performance goals, there are obviously things that need to change.

Unfortunately, this year is a waiting game. All evidence points to it not being a question of *if* things shut down again, but rather a question of *when*. The difference is that last year we did not have the benefit of experience. This year we do. Ultimately we are going to work to put on some sort of performance this year in whatever form it has to be in – be it live and in-person, streamed from the music suite, or edited together as a virtual orchestra.

To that end – my main goal this year is to make the transition between in-person, blended, and virtual teaching as seamless as possible, scaling our repertoire up or down based on what we are reasonably able to accomplish.

On the following pages I've listed a few major changes that will be taking place this year.

Room & Teacher changes:

- The music teachers have worked out a system to arrange our classrooms that ensures only string and music technology classes will be taught in A105 to reduce aerosol exposure.
- For the first half of the year, I have opted to not have wind instruments in the orchestra to reduce aerosol exposure. I will revisit this decision after our winter performance date.
- Hand sanitizer will be available in each classroom and in the hall outside A105.
- Music stands will be left in place between rehearsals, so the same students will use the same stands each day. If stands or seats need to be moved, they will be sanitized afterward.
- Seating may need to be flexible as students transition between virtual and in-person.
- Mr. H will wear gloves if he needs to handle any student's instrument.
- Mr. H will be wearing a mask at all times due to his own health risks.

Student changes:

- As of Aug. 17, all students must wear a mask in class unless specified otherwise by a 504 plan.
- Students will be asked to wash or sanitize hands before and after handling their instruments.
- Students will be asked not to handle another student's materials or instruments.
- Students will be dismissed during homeroom to get instruments when they are dismissed to go to their lockers. (reminder – students must now report straight to HR each morning)
- It is recommended that students who are able to do so take their instruments home every weekend, if not every day, in anticipation of a closure.

Lesson/sectional changes:

- Lesson/sectional requirements will be lowered this year – string students will only be responsible for attending 3 lessons each marking period in an effort to lower the amount of students in the music suite at a time.
- Practice and recording assignments will be available as an option for the sectional grade.
- Virtual students will have the chance to have virtual lessons, which will majorly work the same as if students were in school. It is possible that we will move entirely to this model if we move to blended/virtual instruction.

Google Classroom: join code VQUGQXP

Teachers have been told to utilize the Google suite to smooth the potential switch between in-person, blended, and virtual instruction. Some of you have already opted to remain virtual for this first part of the year.

Due to the nature of internet latency and the *nearly* (but not quite) instant speed which information travels online, live participation virtually in ensembles is simply not a possibility. Anyone in musical last year has already had an experience of what trying to rehearse live online is like. Any virtual performance you have seen is the product of hours (if not days) of guided practice and editing.

Because of this, students joining rehearsal via stream will need to follow certain guidelines and will need to treat 1st period rehearsal as guided practicing. Specifics will be posted in Google Classroom.

- Students will need to join our google classroom using the join code above using their SCHOOL PROVIDED EMAIL ADDRESS. The google class will not be accessible from any other account.
- Students will have access to a 'virtual folder' in the google classroom containing all their music.
- Depending on school's status (current in-person model, blended, or virtual), Mr. H will adjust rehearsal procedure and goals as needed.
- Students joining rehearsal via stream should use headphones whenever possible and must be sure to have their microphones muted to avoid feedback or delayed audio for other streaming students.
- Mr. H will keep tabs on the stream's chat, and will also be reachable by the methods below.

Instrument Cleaning

As string players, we need to be especially careful how we take care of our instruments. We cannot just douse our instruments in sanitizer or give it a bath after all – the majority of our instrument is wood, and by nature is very sensitive and fragile when it comes to liquid. Below I have provided information from the American String Teachers Association. I encourage you to go to astastings.org if you are interested in further information for care of your instrument.

Normal Cleaning and Care

- Wiping down your instrument after you play with a soft clean cloth is usually sufficient. Wipe off rosin dust from the strings and fingerboard and anywhere else it has accumulated. Wipe rosin from the bow stick, but not the hair.
- Areas of high contact with your skin may need extra cleaning (bow hold, chinrest, fingerboard, neck, pegs). Only use natural cleaning products without any alcohol or solvent, like *Method All Purpose* cleaner. Spray the cleaning solution on a soft cloth, not directly on the instrument! Wipe off dirt, sweat, and makeup. *Method All Purpose* cleaner may also be used to gently clean the front, back, sides, and scroll of your instrument. Instrument varnish is very delicate. Test a small area first to be certain the varnish is not damaged.
- **Never use alcohol or solvent-based products. Alcohol, solvent, and hand sanitizer will damage the varnish on your instrument.**

Special COVID-19 Concerns

- Avoid sharing instruments. Wash hands with soap and water for 20 seconds before and after handling your instrument. Regarding sanitizing and disinfecting your instrument: You can safely use a dab of rubbing alcohol on a cotton swab or tiny piece of cloth to wipe ONLY the strings and fingerboard of your instrument.
- **Do not touch any other parts with alcohol.**
- **Never use alcohol-based products on varnished wood. Alcohol, solvent, and hand sanitizer will damage the varnish on your instrument.**
- The inside of cases can be sprayed with an aerosol disinfectant such as Lysol. Remove the instrument, lightly spray the inside surface of the case, and let the case sit open until the surface is dry before placing the instrument back into it.

Contact

In an attempt to save paper and resources, Mr. Hollenberg has started an email newsletter to inform parents/guardians of orchestra business. This will be sent out periodically and will contain important information about orchestra events, fundraisers, etc. that students and parents will need to be aware of. To make sure that you get these emails, please either add Mr. Hollenberg as a contact, or take steps to ensure that his emails will not go directly to spam.

Additionally, Mr. Hollenberg or the band/orchestra boosters may occasionally make contact home regarding school or orchestra business by email, phone, Remind, or through mail.

Mr. Hollenberg can be contacted the following ways.

- Email: jhollenberg@indians.k12.pa.us
- Phone: Please try school number first – I will use the work-from-home number only if teachers are told to refrain from entering the building.
 - School: (570)648-5731 ext. 3424
 - Work-from-home: (570)884-4024
- Remind app: text @sahorchest to 81010 or enter class code @sahorchest in Remind to register for text announcements.

***NOTE: Students must now have parental permission to use Remind.**

Orchestra Handbook Form

Please fill out all requested information. Sign and return to Mr. H (electronically or in-person) or to the main office to acknowledge that you have received, read, and understood the orchestra handbook. Additionally please fill in all requested information where able.

- I give my permission for my child to use Remind for the purpose of Orchestra business and announcements. (check box if yes) **CLASS CODE: @saorchest

Student Name (print)

Parent/Guardian Name (print)

Student Signature

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

Parent/Guardian Preferred Phone

Parent/Guardian Preferred Email

Additional Phone (if applicable)

Additional Email (if applicable)

Orchestra instrument

Other played instruments (if any)

Instrument information - String players only: (check one) Mine__ Schools__

Not all instruments may have all of what is asked for. Fill in what you are able.

Instrument_____ Size_____ Year_____

Make(ex. Samuel Eastman, Yamaha, etc)_____

Model Number_____ Serial Number_____

If you have an additional school instrument at home, please provide the information for that instrument below

Instrument_____ Size_____ Year_____

Make(ex. Samuel Eastman, Yamaha, etc)_____

Model Number_____ Serial Number_____