



Seminole Middle School  
2014-2015  
Orchestra Handbook

Elana Schaer  
Orchestra and Guitar Director

Wendy Bryan  
Principal



## **Welcome!**

Welcome to the 2014-2015 school year. I am very excited to begin our new year at Seminole Middle School. On the following pages, you will find a detailed description of the orchestra and guitar program at Seminole Middle School. Please read this handbook with your child and then have them return the last page to me stating that you understand the policies and guidelines regarding this class, and if you would like to volunteer. If you have any questions pertaining to the information in this handbook, please do not hesitate to call. My email address is listed on the front of this handbook. If you need to speak with me directly, please call the main office at SMS. If I am unavailable to take your call, please leave a message and I will return your call as soon as possible. I am looking forward to a great year! Thanks and best wishes!

Sincerely,

**Elana Schaer**  
Orchestra and Guitar Director

## **Why Music?**

Everyone in society is affected in some way by music. We hear music at religious and patriotic ceremonies, graduations, weddings, funerals, in movies and television, at sporting events, and it is a part of the holidays in every culture. Everyone has their favorite song that brings back special memories. Music can bring sophistication to a dinner party or special event. Music can get an athletic crowd enthusiastic about their team. It can also bring a person to tears at a funeral.

Music is important to all students because all students can participate, even students with disabilities. Music has been proven to help with visual processing, vocabulary, language barriers, memory, motor, social, math, and reading skills. A music classroom also provides a very positive, consistent, and supportive learning environment. Music also provides students with an aesthetic experience that they cannot receive in any other subject. Playing an instrument is something that can become a lifelong hobby or career. Being a musician is a wonderful thing!



### **Equipment and Supplies:**

1. An instrument in good playing condition (No Colored Instruments)
2. A sharp pencil with an eraser (no pens are allowed in class)
3. A method book
  - a. Essential Elements for Strings 2000 – Book 1 for your instrument
  - b. H.O.T. 1<sup>st</sup> year Guitar
4. A black, 3-ring binder with sheet protectors for music
5. Music stands are provided at school, however, it might be a good idea to get one for home to help create the ideal practice environment.

### **Specific Instrument Needs:**

Violin/Viola: instrument, bow, case, rosin, cloth, shoulder rest, method book, an extra set of strings

Cello/Bass: instrument, bow, case, rosin, cloth, method book, rock stop/endpin holder, extra set of strings

Guitar: instrument, method book, foot stool, extra set of strings

### **Instrument Rental:**

The orchestra program has a limited number of instruments that are available to rent during the school year and during the summer months. The larger instruments are rented on a first come, first served basis, until they are gone. The following rental fees apply:

Full Year: \$60.00 Half-year: \$35.00 Summer: \$35.00 2nd Instrument: \$30.00

The orchestra program does not provide rosin, cleaning cloths, shoulder rests, rockstops or method books. These items can be found at any of our local music stores.

The school rental fees are a nominal charge. They do not come close to covering the maintenance and replacement costs as they wear out over time. Damaged or lost instruments are the responsibility of the student and parent for the duration of the rental contract.

\*\* Please consult Ms. Schaer before purchasing an instrument from anywhere besides a music store. Usually, instruments from e-Bay are in **POOR WORKING CONDITION** and they need a lot of repair. This can result in more money spent than the instrument is actually worth. Instruments from Wal-Mart and/or Department stores are **unacceptable**. Please contact me with further questions.\*\*

### **Uniform:**

**Ladies:** white dress shirt, long black skirt or nice black dress pants, (no jeans in any color), black dress shoes, black nylons/socks. (no tennis shoes, spaghetti strap shirts, inappropriate jewelry, fingernail polish, etc.)

**Gentlemen:** white collared dress shirt, black dress pants (no jeans in any color), black dress shoes, black socks (no tennis shoes or ties)

CONCERTS ARE EXCITING EVENTS SO PLEASE DRESS UP AND LOOK NICE!

### **Instrument Repairs:**

PLEASE DO NOT TRY TO REPAIR THE INSTRUMENT YOURSELF! I AM ABLE TO FIX MINOR REPAIRS BEFORE, DURING, OR AFTER CLASS. HERE ARE SOME MINOR PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS:

1. A string is loose: I will tune it before class.
2. The bridge has fallen: I will stand it back up.
3. There is a broken string: I will put on a new one.
4. A peg or fine tuner is too loose or too tight: I will fix it.
5. Others: I will send home a letter if your instrument needs professional repairs.

### **Broken String/Bridge Replacements:**

Strings break due to a number of reasons. If a string breaks the student must replace the string ASAP. Strings and bridges can be purchased at a local music store or over the approved Internet sites. It is very important to always have an extra set of strings in case of an emergency.

### **Before Bringing the Instrument to School:**

Please label all materials with the student's name. Put an index card (or piece of paper) inside the case with the student's name. It is also a good idea to place a luggage tag on the outside of the case. Students are responsible for their own instrument throughout the school day. My classroom is locked while I am not in the room and students may leave their instrument in my classroom. However, they must come to my classroom at the end of the day to get their instrument to take home with them.

### **Transporting Instruments:**

All students are responsible for transporting their instrument to and from school each day. If you are using a school owned cello or bass, it is recommended that you rent another one from a local music store to keep at home. Therefore, the student will not have to transport the large instrument. If a student loses/damages an instrument, the parent/guardian is responsible for replacing the instrument and/or providing payment of the full value to SMS.

### **Class Expectations:**

1. Students will arrive to class on time.
2. Students will bring their instrument and any necessary supplies to each class. (If the instrument is being repaired, please bring a signed note from your parent/guardian.)
3. Bring *your own music/method book* to each class.
4. Bring *your own pencil* to each class.
5. It is ok to talk:
  - during packing up time, during organized discussions, during designated free time.
6. It is not ok to talk:
  - during tuning procedures, during lessons/activities, rehearsals, while the teacher is talking or when a classmate is asking the teacher a question.

**Please raise your hand and wait to be called on if you have something to say during class time!**
7. Be respectful of the equipment in the room.
8. Respect each other – Please use behavior that is appropriate and kind to all of your classmates so that as a class we can have a safe and positive environment for everyone.
9. Please get a drink of water and/or use the bathroom before coming to class. Bathroom passes will be given out in emergency situations only! An orchestra is a team and we need everyone present to make it a successful experience for everyone.
10. Students must have short fingernails on both hands! Girls **MAY NOT** have fake fingernails during the school year unless it is during a vacation, and they are removed before returning to school.
11. HAVE FUN!

### **SMS School Wide Discipline Policy:**

Orchestra and guitar students are expected to display appropriate behavior and make good choices while they are in all areas of the campus. Should a student choose to make poor decisions regarding behavior, the following consequences will occur:

- 1st Step: Verbal warning, document in FOCUS, and sign the RED BOOK.
- 2nd Step: Parent notification, document in FOCUS, and After-School Detention.
- 3rd Step: Parent notification, Guidance Referral.
- 4th Step: Administrative Referral.

\*\*\*The discipline steps start over at the beginning of each nine week grading period.

### **Practicing:**

To learn to play a string instrument decently requires practicing. Elementary and Middle School students should practice at least 100 minutes a week. It is beneficial to the students to have a structured practice time and space at home. Be aware that the sounds that may come out of the instrument might be less than pleasant at first but things should get better as the year progresses. PERFECT PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT!

### **Extra help:**

Extra help will be provided any day after school. If a student would like to stay after school, I need a note from a parent/guardian and the student must confirm the date with me and bring me the note at least a few days ahead of time so that I can make sure that my schedule is free.

### **Mandatory After School Rehearsals:**

There will be a few mandatory after school rehearsals to prepare for our concerts and MPA performance this year. This is so that all of the orchestra students will have the opportunity to play in a large ensemble before the actual performance dates. A list of dates for the mandatory rehearsals will be given at a later date.

### **Orchestra Grading Policy:**

Students will be graded based on the following criteria....

1. **Homework:** worksheets or homework assignments will be worth 100 points.
2. **Assessment:** students will be formally assessed throughout the year with playing tests and quizzes as well as written tests and quizzes. Tests will be worth 200 points.
3. **Concerts:** concerts are mandatory and will be worth 500 points.

### **Rehearsals, Concerts, and Attendance:**

Orchestra is a CO-Curricular course according to the Florida Department of Education and the Course Code Description Orchestra. This means that all students are expected to attend rehearsals and performances that are not during the regular school day. Unexcused absences from rehearsals, concerts, music performance assessments, or other public performances will result in a full grade level drop on the student's report card for that grading period. An absence MAY be excused by Ms. Schaer with advanced notice if the student brings a note from home with a valid explanation. An alternative assignment will be given for all students who miss a concert, MPA, or other public performance.

### **Parent Volunteers:**

Any extra help is greatly appreciated. I will be calling all of the volunteers to help with things such as chaperoning, refreshments, etc. An approved volunteer form is required for each volunteer. This form must be filled out on the Polk County website.

*Thank you for taking the time to review the orchestra handbook! If you have any questions regarding the student handbook please feel free to contact me at any time. Please sign and return the following page to Ms. Schaer by August 30th. By returning the last page of the handbook, your student will receive their first 100 points for the year. ☺*

## *Orchestra Handbook Contract*

### Student Statement:

I have read the band handbook for the SMS Orchestra Program. I understand all aspects of this handbook and agree to abide by the policies and procedures that have been addressed. I know that I represent Seminole Middle School as a member of the orchestra and that this is a privilege that is earned with my attitude, work ethic, and commitment to excellence. I am freely choosing to be a part of this orchestra family and I will do everything I can to make this orchestra the best it can be.

Student Name (PRINTED): \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

---

### Parent Statement:

I have read the orchestra handbook with my child. We understand and agree to abide by the policies and procedures that have been addressed. I will hold my student accountable to honor his/her above statement by fully supporting his/her musical endeavors.

Parent/Guardian Name (PRINTED): \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent 1 Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent 2 Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent 1 Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Parent 2 Email: \_\_\_\_\_



Please contact me for volunteer opportunities!