

**EAGLE STAFF
MIDDLE SCHOOL
ORCHESTRAS**

2022-2023 STUDENT HANDBOOK

EAGLE STAFF MIDDLE SCHOOL ORCHESTRAS

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WELCOME LETTER

Dear Eagle Staff Orchestra Family,

Welcome to the 2022-23 year! My name is Hannah Gorham, and I am serving as RESMS's new Director of Orchestras; I also teach Guitar Lab and our new Experience Music elective. My commitment to you is maintaining an orchestra program that centers on student joy, hope, and celebration of success. I believe deeply in every student's **inherent** worth, creativity, and intelligence and strive to make orchestra a place where they can foster and showcase that.

The purpose of this Student Handbook is to provide students and families with the information necessary to navigate through the 2022-2023 school year. If there are ever changes to this information, I will communicate directly with you! As much as it is important to stay abreast on the information from this Handbook, it is equally important that students and families maintain constant communication throughout the year so that we can be on the same page at all times whenever changes occur.

As a member of orchestra, and of the music department in general, students will be exposed to opportunities and experiences that will lead to a positive, safe, and successful time in the program and at the school. This may include local and out-of-state trips, student leadership opportunities, partnerships with local organizations, and the playing a variety of genres of music.

While the traditional instruments of orchestra are violin, viola, cello, and bass, if your student already plays a secondary or different instrument that isn't always included in a school ensemble (piano, harp, guitar) and would still like to be a part of orchestra, please let me know! It is possible we can work that into our ensemble, as my main priority is creating a space where all students belong.

Thank you for choosing to be a part of orchestra this year!



Hannah Gorham
Director of Orchestras, Robert Eagle Staff Middle School

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COURSE OUTLINE

Instructor: Hannah Gorham | hrgorham@seattleschools.org

REQUIRED MATERIALS:

- Instrument & Accessories for instrument care
 - Violins and violas should have an instrument that includes a shoulder rest- if you need help acquiring one, please tell Ms. Gorham!
 - Cellos and basses should have a rock stop for their endpin. We have them available at the school for class and concert use, but it would be helpful to have one at home!
 - All instruments should have a soft cloth for cleaning and bow rosin – again, if you need help getting any materials, please let Ms. Gorham know
- Music folder that includes all sheet music and handouts given throughout the school year
- Writing utensil (pencil, pen, etc.)
- School-provided laptop device

BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS (Aligned with SOAR) – SCHOLARS PRIORITIZE:

- Safety
- Ownership
- Achievement
- Resilience

HOME LEARNING:

Students are encouraged to practice regularly on their own addition to their daily classes. Students are encouraged to aim for 150 minutes of practice time per week at home, although the quality of the practice is of utmost importance than the quantity. **My priority is working with individual students to explore the best method of practice for them, as I understand not all living situations allow for practice due to quiet hours, adults working at home, and sibling childcare.** In the first weeks of school, we will talk about practice strategies and students will identify a place and time they are able to practice on their own (at home, before or after school in a practice room, etc)

PERFORMANCES:

Participation in performances is a requirement for orchestra, as they serve as the culmination and summation of a student's learning during a particular timeframe. Not only is it a part of the students' grades, but attendance at these performances particularly influence the sound and camaraderie of the group. If students will need to miss performances, please follow the stated protocol below:

1. Students must provide a two weeks' notice of said absence prior to the performance. Absences that will be considered "excused" are, but not limited to, **medical and family emergencies, school-sanctioned sports or clubs, and/or religious engagements.** If it is impossible to give two weeks' notice, families should communicate with the director as soon as able and we will work out an alternative solution.
2. Students who successfully provide an early notice will be given an "excused" grade for the performance. The Director will provide students with an alternative assignment with the intent to simulate a performance that serves as a summative celebration of a student's learning. All alternative assignments will be under the discretion of the Director.

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CONCERT SCHEDULE

The following outlines the required performances for the year. If other performance opportunities arise, such as a local organization partnership, fundraising opportunity, or in-school concert, students will be asked to perform as they are able but they will not be required.

Unless listed, all performances involve all orchestras (premier, intermediate, and concert).

DECEMBER

- **6th Annual Winter Concert**
 - o Tuesday 12/06 @ 7PM

MARCH

- **6th Annual Spring Concert**
 - o Tuesday, 03/28 @ 7PM

JUNE

- **End Of The Year Concert**
 - o 06/13 @ 7PM

Possible Overnight Trip:

- **CONCERT ORCHESTRA ONLY: Disney Magic Music Days or WorldStrides Festival**
 - o 05/31-06/04 @ Overnight – Disneyland – Anaheim, CA* TBD

*The overnight travel policies for Seattle Public Schools (SPS) middle school groups for the 2022-2023 school year are still being finalized at the time of writing this Handbook. The overnight trips indicated on the calendar are considered “To Be Determined” at this time, but the planning process (including the announcement of specific dates), will commence once the policies have been determined.

Other performance dates for optional performances will be announced as they come up

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ENSEMBLES

PREMIER ORCHESTRA (Period 1) is an introductory level ensemble that is **open to all students in grades 6-8** who have had 0-1 years' worth (or the equivalent) of stringed instrument experience. Students will learn the concepts of music theory and will explore how to play a violin, viola, cello, or bass in an individual and group setting. The class will emphasize structured skill development through method books and music designed for beginning musicians. This is a full year class and will perform at all 3 school concerts (Winter, Spring, and End of Year)

INTERMEDIATE ORCHESTRA (Period 2) is an intermediate level ensemble and is **open to all students in grades 6-8** who have had 1-2 years' worth (or the equivalent) of experience on their instrument. Students will continue to develop their musical knowledge and skills, as well as learn more techniques/concepts through method books and playing intermediate level musical works. Students will also work in small ensembles (duets, trios, and quartets). This is a full year class and will perform at all 3 school concerts (Winter, Spring, and End of Year). *Students formerly in Premier Orchestra will be automatically moved up to Intermediate Orchestra.*

CONCERT ORCHESTRA (Period 3) is the highest level ensemble and is open to all students in grades 6-8 who have had 2+ years' worth (or the equivalent) of stringed instrument experience. Students will continue to develop their musical knowledge and skills, as well as learn more advanced techniques/concepts through innovative new music and traditional orchestra music. Students will also work in small ensembles (duets, trios, and quartets). This is a full year class and will perform at all 3 school concerts (Winter, Spring, and End of Year) *Students formerly in Intermediate Orchestra will be automatically moved up to Concert Orchestra. Students in Premier Orchestra wishing to join Concert Orchestra will need to get director permission at the end of the school year.*

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GRADING

GRADE Category	Points possible	DESCRIPTION
PERFORMANCES	40 per performance	Mandatory performances throughout, assessed using the group performance rubric
PLAYING TESTS	20 per playing test	Assessed throughout the year using the playing test rubric. Some playing tests will be self-graded.
REHEARSALS	2 points per day	Assessed at the conclusion of every week using the rehearsal rubric. 2 points are possible per day. Excused absences do not lower a students rehearsal grade.
SPECIAL PROJECTS (may or may not include playing)	Points announced with the project – some are small (day long) others may be longer	Any in-class or take home learnings that measure something not included in the 3 previous grading categories. Some projects will be self-graded.

Grading for all music classes will be aligned to the school's Standards-Based Grading system. Listed below is the divisions of grading for each ensemble, as well as the language used in the Standards-Based Grading:

PERCENTAGE	LEVEL OF RUBRIC	MARK IN GRADE BOOK	MEANING
95%	Exceeding Standard	L4	I'm ready for more. I consistently demonstrate that I've met the standard and am taking on the next level of this skill.
85%	Meeting Standard	L3	I've got this. I consistently demonstrate that I understand or can do what is expected at this grade level by the end of the year.
75%	Approaching Standard	L2	I'm in progress. There are some gaps in my understanding or ability, yet I'm making progress and have a plan for how to refine my skills.
65%	Just Starting	L1	I'm just starting to learn this skill. I am trying, but still need support to better understand the standard.

MAKEUP/LATE WORK POLICY

Students will have the opportunity to make up an absence from missed graded performances if they informed the Director within two weeks prior to the absence. For written assignments and projects, students can submit their missing work up until the last day of the given quarter **without any penalty**. However, in the gradebook, the assignment will be marked as "L1" with a "Missing" mark as a placeholder until the assignment is submitted. If the assignment is not submitted, it will remain as an L1 in the gradebook.

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INSTRUMENT LOANING & SUPPLIES

Students who are in need of borrowing school instruments will be able to do so for free from the school inventory, with approval from the Director and completion of the Instrument Rental Form.

Students wishing to purchase or rent their own instruments can do so with local instrumental music vendors. Listed below are a few, but not limited to, options within a 20-mile radius of the school. Please feel free to explore purchasing instruments and supplies at other music vendors as well:

AMERICAN MUSIC	KENNELLY KEYS	METROPOLITAN MUSIC	MUSIC & ARTS	TED BROWN
4450 Fremont Ave N Seattle, WA 98103 (206) 633-1774	4918 196th St SW Lynnwood, WA 98036 (425) 771-7020	8414 5th Ave NE Seattle, WA 98115 (206) 729-9299	10120 Main St Bothell, WA 98011 (425) 486-5000	1006 NE 50th St Seattle, WA 98105 (206) 622-0171

Method Books:

If you are able to purchase a method book, I ask that you do! If your student would like to use a school copy, we will have them available.

Students can purchase the following books at the stores listed above or online. :

- **Premier Orchestra: String Basics Book 1 (Blue and RED cover)**
- **Intermediate Orchestra: String Basics Book 2 (Blue and MORE BLUE color)**
- **Concert Orchestra: Intermediate orchestra book will be used along with teacher-given supplementary materials**

NOTE: When purchasing method books, please make sure that you choose the book for the instrument that your student plays. The instrument version is indicated at the top of the book.

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PROGRAM FEE

The following are the anticipated costs associated with the orchestra's operations and events/performances for this year. Please note that the Director and FORESMA are committed to working with families to ensure that EACH and EVERY students who is interested in participating in all activities are able to do so, regardless of each family's financial situation. If your family anticipates a difficulty in covering the expenses for your student, please contact me directly.

In order to help meet some of our financial needs, we are requesting a **\$40** program fee to those who can help provide financial assistance for the music program's operations costs. **Please note that paying the activity fee is NOT mandatory and will NOT have a negative effect on your student's participation in music.** The activity fee donation provides aid for the following:

- Sheet music for the Bands and Orchestras
- Instrument purchases and repairs
- Transportation to local and overnight activities
- Financial assistance/scholarships for students
- Festival fee performance supplements
- Specialized private instructors and guest clinicians

You can pay this fee in a couple ways:

- *Paying by credit card?* Go to www.Foresma.Org and click on the button to pay your fee
- *Paying by check?* Make checks out to "FORESMA" and mail to:
FORESMA c/o Robert Eagle Staff Middle School,
1330 N 90th St, Seattle, WA 98103

UNIFORM INFORMATION

In addition to the sounds of the ensembles, an integral component of a performance is the visual aesthetics of the ensemble. Students are required to dress in conjunction with the uniform policies for every performance, to achieve uniformity within the group. Dressing appropriately and respectfully will promote a sense of professionalism and respect for their audience and fellow student musicians.

Students are responsible for acquiring their own uniform requirements (unless otherwise noted), but please note that we will have an inventory of uniform parts for those in need. *If you need*

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assistance on where to find a specific article of clothing, or if you need assistance in acquiring uniform parts, please contact Ms. Gorham directly

CONCERT ATTIRE FOR ALL ORCHESTRAS:

- “Concert Black”
- Listed below are examples that students can wear. Please note that students are not limited to these examples and are non-discriminatory to how students identify themselves (gender, culture, religion, etc.). Students can choose to wear an all-black concert attire not on the list, pending approval from the Director.
 - All black button down shirt or tuxedo/suit
 - All black dress
 - All black pants/slacks/leggings/stockings
 - All black cultural/religious clothing
 - All black socks
 - All black shoes

PERFORMANCE ETTIQUETTE

An integral part of the performance experience is the tone and atmosphere that is established for the environment. In order to ensure a professional and traditional setting, students are to follow the guidelines listed below as a performer and as an audience member. We will practice these expectations in class.

AS A PERFORMER:

- Dress in accordance to the uniform attire
- Bring all music stored in a folder to the stage
- Make sure all instrument parts are present and secured
- Silence or turn off electronic devices
- No eating or drinking on stage
- Enter and exit the stage in a timely and organized manner
- Be respectful, classy, and positive at all times.

AS AN AUDIENCE MEMBER:

- Attend the entire concert as much as possible out of respect to the efforts, dedication, and learning of all those involved. Audience members are expected to stay seated and only permitted to leave or enter the concert in-between selections or ensemble transitions

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- Silence or turn off electronic devices
- Refrain from holding conversations during the performance of a piece
- Please refrain from eating or drinking in the middle of a performance
 - Audience members are encouraged to participate in the bake sales before and after the concert, as well as during transitions
- Applaud for the performance of your few student musicians at the end of a piece when the conductor lowers their hands, and at the bow of the group
 - Appropriate to applaud after a solo during a Jazz Band performance
- Be respectful, classy, and positive at all times. Be a representative of the school!

FORESMA

The Friends of Robert Eagle Staff Musical Arts (FORESMA) is a booster group of dedicated parents and guardians who help support and sustain the Bands and Orchestras. FORESMA's mission is to ensure access to music education for all interested RESMS students by raising funds, volunteering, and providing logistical support to the RESMS music directors. FORESMA's most important resource is its community of families and friends – your interest and participation are welcome and needed! FORESMA meets on the second Monday of every month at 7PM in either the Band Room or Orchestra Room (virtually during the remote learning phase).

Listed below are some ways that families can get involved with FORESMA:

- Visit www.foresma.org for information and up-to-date announcements regarding the RESMS Music programs.
- Interested in being a part of the leadership team? Board Positions include President, Vice-President, Secretary, as well as multiple Chair and Coordinator heads (fundraising, communication, Trip Coordinator, etc.). Please inform one of the current Board Members if you are interested in serving in one of the positions.
- Information will be forthcoming from FORESMA about how and when to pay the Activity Fee. Please visit <https://www.foresma.org> for up to date information on payment.
- If you have an unused instrument in good working condition, please consider making an in-kind donation so we can loan it to our students in need.

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- Whatever you have to give, we welcome your help in building a strong parental booster community for the Eagle Staff Music Program. If you would like to get involved and volunteer, please email any questions and suggestions to info@foresma.org or volunteer@foresma.org

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

PRACTICE ROOMS:

There are 5 practice rooms located in the Band Room. Students are welcome to use the practice rooms for individual rehearsals, small group sectionals/practices, and composition/arranging projects. The practice rooms will be open an hour before school starts, during lunch, and an hour after school ends. Students are not permitted to use the practice room outside of those hours and the Director must be present.

ROOM MAINTENANCE:

In order to preserve the cleanliness of our room and materials, students are not allowed to eat or drink in the orchestra room or practice rooms, except for water. Students will also be expected to clean and pick up any belongings in their personal area during rehearsals and practice rooms, including personal items, sheet music, and instrument parts.

CONTACT ME:

If you have any questions at any point this year, please contact me and I am happy to chat!
My email address is hrgorham@seattleschools.org

Make sure you have completed the family survey (QR code and link below). This helps me keep track of the best way to contact your family, as I understand different families have different preferences.

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Or, type this link into your browser: <https://forms.office.com/r/Ai5nqqf057>