

Instrumental Music Program Checklist

2013 - 2014 School Year

Mr. Peck & Mr. Henning, Music Teachers

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<http://instrumental-music.ho.ausd.net>

Things to prepare:

✓ **Instrument!** They are available from local music stores for rent or purchase. And they are available online, such as Shar.com, Brasswind.com, Ebay or Craigslist. (Watch out for false economy--the price is usually a good indicator of quality, and your child shouldn't be struggling with an inferior instrument. And there are many inferior instruments out there, which will discourage your child very quickly.)

✓ **Metronome** and **Music Stand!** These are basic tools for effective practicing.

✓ **Accessories!** These vary with the instrument. Examples: reeds, oil, rosin, swab...

✓ **Luggage tag** for the instrument case! The teachers need to recognize who owns what, and you want your valuable instrument well marked, in case it gets lost.

✓ The case should have a working **pencil!** It will be needed at every class.

✓ The student must have a personalized **3-ring binder** with **sheet protectors** (10 is a good start)!

✓ Binder **Tab Dividers** are extremely helpful.

✓ Private **lessons!** Highly recommended, advised, suggested, encouraged...

Highland Oaks School

Music Program Syllabus

2013 - 2014 School Year

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Welcome! I'm always very proud of our music groups and I'm glad you'll be joining our instrumental Music Program here at Highland Oaks School. This will be my (Mr. Peck's) 9th year of teaching at Highland Oaks School and 30th year all together as a music teacher. Mr. Henning has been teaching in Arcadia almost as long, and is active as a singer and brass player, as well as being a cellist.

Each year new groups are formed made up of new and returning musicians. Each group has a personality of its own. This is part of what makes it so fun to teach you! Each year our goal is to select a variety of high quality music for you that will improve your musicianship and be as enjoyable for you to play as it is for your parents to hear. Every school year is a new beginning. Let's work hard together to make your groups exciting and successful. we'll work hard to make sure that we all enjoy the process as well as the end result. Go Hawks!

We'd like also to express thanks to your parents for helping us provide you with some exceptional opportunities through their commitment to volunteer their time as they help organize classroom things, and chaperone, and help us take care of our students. we feel very fortunate to work in this district! Here are some details about your music classes:

Class Rules:

- All regular school rules will apply in music classes.

Additionally, these are my expectations for a successful, productive class:

- Enter the room in an orderly manner at the start of the period and get set up to play right away. Check the board for instructions for the day and set up accordingly.
- For obvious reasons, **no gum, food or drink (except water) in the Music Room** please.
- Always be prepared with a pencil, music and your instrument. The instrument case must be clearly labelled with a luggage tag.
- **We do not handle other people's instruments or possessions.** For example, if you are not a percussionist, please don't play the drums or mallets. Also, we only touch the music stands and chairs for small adjustments. This is very important. They are easy to move, but are carefully placed, and there are many other classes besides yours, using the same equipment.

- **We run quiet rehearsals**, that is, no extra playing or talking during the rehearsal other than what is required by the instructor. We won't stop the music unless we need to fix or learn something to make us better. When the music stops it should be quiet enough to hear the director's instructions. *Instructions are clear, to the point, and not repeated. The student is expected to stay alert throughout our short rehearsals.*
- **We treat each other with respect in Music**. In all our music classes students look out for each other, help each other with set-up, music, carrying instruments and stands, whatever is needed. If you see someone struggling, offer to help. We help each other like a family. Teasing or bullying of any kind will not be allowed in music classes. This essential cooperative mindset carries over into the music program at Foothills Middle and Arcadia High School.
- **We cooperate, working hard together toward specific goals**, while having fun in the process. Students need to follow all directives given by the instructor or student leaders directing the exercise or practice. Music groups require a high degree of cooperation toward achieving large goals that cannot be reached unless everyone does their part.
- **We cannot rough-house or chase one another at all in the Music Room**. There are always expensive instruments that can be easily broken if we play around during class whether inside or out. Every setting has a set of behaviors that are allowed and those that are not. Weddings, religious ceremonies, courtrooms, the doctor's office or even classical music performances are all examples of events and places that require certain behavior. As Upper Division Highland Oaks School students, you are now fully capable of making correct choices about how to behave. Let's save the rough playing for your back yard.
- **Weekly Attendance at music class is required**. We take roll and let the office know who is missing from my rehearsals. Missing more than the occasional rehearsal will result in a lower grade for the trimester depending of course on the circumstances. Part of this is for our students' safety. Parents want to know that their student is safe and productively working when they are at school, and this especially includes the after-school rehearsal times.
- **Excellent field trip behavior is always required**. In order to perform at locations like One Colorado and the Westfield Santa Anita Mall, we require excellent trip behavior of all my students. If we had anything less than great, helpful student behavior, we could not travel. If students choose to behave inappropriately they may lose their travel privileges for the following trip or for the year. Poor behavior on our trips is rare, but has happened on the odd occasion. Behaviors that are especially inappropriate include rudeness or harassment directed toward chaperones, event hosts or teachers, disruptive, boisterous or dangerous

behavior, any sort of vandalism of the host facility or being late to check-ins.

Consequences:

Students who do not follow the class rules will experience these ordered consequences as deemed necessary by the instructor. We will usually follow the following order unless the situation dictates otherwise:

1. **Verbal Warnings:** We will get the student's attention and ask them to focus on what we are currently working on. This is their warning. If the behavior persists we will write down student's name in the behavior log and ask them to see us at the end of rehearsal. We will visit with the student to find out what was going on and make a plan to improve the behavior in the future. Some infractions may result in a lunchtime detention in the Music Room.
2. **Moving Students:** As appropriate we will try to move the student to another location in the room closer to us and away from the distraction and influence of others as this is often part of the problem.
3. **Calling Parents:** we will let a parent know right away if their child's behavior is consistently disruptive in my class and get your help and insight into correcting the problem. We do not want to let poor behavior persist and grow into a habit that lasts all year. We keep track of student behavior and give "S" or "R" marks in Life Skills if the student has not fixed the behavior by mid-term grade report time or by the end of each quarter. We don't take giving "S"s or "R"s lightly as these can disqualify students from certain privileges. We would much prefer working with parents to fix the behavior.
4. **Lunch or After School Detention.** This consequence may result if the behavior is not fixed by the student. Students who skip or forget a detention will earn an "S" or "R" on for their Life Skills grade in Music unless they arrange to make it up. We will call a parent that day to let them know what is happening and request your help.
5. **Office Referral:** If a detention with me in the music room does not improve the student's behavior, future behavior problems within that month will result in the student being given an Office Referral to see the Principal. Students may also be sent directly to the Principal for serious infractions and for most purposeful disrespectful behavior.

Grading:

As per district policy, our grading system reflects the following categories. Each category will be separately evaluated:

- A. Achievement of Curriculum Standards (E= Exceeds Standards, M=Meets Standards, N=Needs Improvement, T=Time Needed)
- B. Life Skills (C=Consistent, O=Often, S=Sometimes, R=Rarely)

A. Achievement of Curriculum Standards

1. Written tests will be given on occasion to be certain theory fundamentals appropriate to the class and grade level are being mastered. These concepts will be taught well ahead of time both in isolation and as part of the regular rehearsal when the concepts are encountered in the music. We are constantly doing this during rehearsal. Concepts will be practiced and assessed before students have to do an actual test. These concepts include pitch reading, time values and names, rest values, time signatures, dynamic markings, road map signs (e.g., *DC al Fine*), repeat signs, expression markings, and tempo markings.
2. Periodic in-class playing tests on scales or assigned exercises to see if each student is progressing. This is hard to quantify in exact terms, because each student is at a different level of proficiency, but we will be able to spot trends if students are not working to improve over several weeks' time.
3. **Practicing at home:** Playing tests on assigned music will occur occasionally as time allows to be sure students are working on their music at home. Recommended *minimum* practice time daily is at least 30 minutes daily 5 days per week. Far better is seven days a week. This is a minimum figure of course and more time daily will result in faster improvement and increased enthusiasm for the instrument. Once a student sits down to practice, 30 minutes can turn into a much longer session. "Well begun is half done."
4. **Attendance at scheduled events in a performing arts class is the equivalent to a student's final exam.** All the members of a group are necessary to the group's success in a concert or parade. Students absent without valid reason let down the others in the group who have worked so hard on the performance. Unexcused absences from scheduled events and concerts will lower a student's grade. Please send a note as soon as possible if your student will miss a performance due to illness, long planned family vacation, family wedding or other similar event or other unforeseen problem. Sports events, because they are usually extra-curricular, are not considered an excused absence. We will work with the student in such cases, (as will many coaches) to make attending both events possible, i.e. arriving late or leaving right after a performance to get to another event. This way a student can honor both of their commitments. In such cases we always thank the student for their dedication to our

groups' success. **The policy of requiring attendance at all performances is continued at the Middle Schools and at Arcadia High School as a necessary part of achieving such high levels of excellence in all their group performances.**

B. Life Skills

1. Students need to come prepared to class daily with pencil, music binder and instrument. Each instance of lacking preparedness is recorded and reviewed later.
2. They set up their instrument, chair and stand and start their tuning or warm up. Students do this from the moment they enter the room and do not wait for the bell or the instructor to start the class for them.

C. Citizenship

1. Students participate in the rehearsal without talking unnecessarily or causing disturbances. It is about LISTENING. (Two ears, and only one mouth!) In large classes, students absolutely must treat each other with respect and follow all directives right away.

Parental Notification: If any student is in danger of getting a low grade in Academics or Life Skills, we will contact parents to let them know of the situation in time for them to work on correcting the problem before the grading period is over. E-mail inquiries from parents about students' behavior are very helpful and always welcome. This provides excellent and easy communication between home and school and helps keep our students on track. We want every student to have an exciting and joyful musical experience here at Highland Oaks.

Instrument Choice and Auditions:

First Band and First Orchestra: For First Band and First Orchestra, students can choose their own instrument to play in the group. The string groups may choose violin, viola, cello or bass. The band students may choose a woodwind or a brass instrument.

Instruments in greatest need:

Both here and at Foothills Middle School (and at Arcadia High School), our performing groups always need more of the lower instruments to make them sound solid, powerful and in tune. If a student is undecided as to their instrument choice but wants to make the largest possible contribution to the group we would recommend considering playing any of these instruments:

For the woodwind family these “in demand” instruments include tenor sax and perhaps bass clarinet.

For brass family the instruments most needed and certainly welcomed appreciatively are baritone, trombone and French horn.

For string orchestras to sound their best, all directors need more students to play basses, celli and violas.

Percussion Auditions: At the start of the 5th grade year percussion students who have played in band or orchestra their 4th grade year are auditioned to determine if they are qualified to join the percussion section.

Percussionists must enter Honors Band in the 5th grade: We don't normally allow students to enter the band program on percussion if they haven't been playing in the band since entering Highland Oaks music classes in the 4th grade. This is because the training that is provided for percussion is fairly rigorous and we need them to be committed to the program throughout their time in the program. We will of course make exceptions on a case-by-case basis for percussionists transferring in to Highland Oaks from other schools. There is the option to enter the percussion program at Foothills Middle School as a 6th grader, or even later, if a student missed joining as a 5th grader. In other words, there are many opportunities.

String Auditions: For the String Orchestras we hold two auditions per year where students play for us and the class. We can then seat them in sections that will make the orchestra sound its best.

Band Auditions: For the Hawks Honors Band, we will assign which specific part students should play based on occasional playing tests, i.e. 1st, 2nd or 3rd trumpet, in order to make the band sound its best and challenge each student at their current level.

Saxophone Auditions: Beginning saxophone students will first audition before playing a sax at school. The best way to do this is to perform well on the clarinet for the first trimester in the clarinet class, and then move to sax class if ready. Students who have been taking private lessons on the saxophone already may demonstrate their skill and knowledge at the start of classes.

District Instrument Assignment and Donations:

We have a small inventory of instruments that are used by students who do not have their own instrument, and for whom acquiring one from a local store (whether renting or buying) would be an impossible hardship. In other words, these instruments are not there for convenience, but to fill a true financial need, in the event of serious difficulty (e.g., failed business, mortgage “under water,” etc.). we will determine, through private conversations with parents, if a family needs an instrument and see if we have one for their use during the first days of music classes, and get them checked out to the student as quickly as possible.

If the student uses a school instrument, the suggested use donation for the school year will be \$80 for woodwind, brass and stringed instruments. This will allow for repair and day to day upkeep for our instruments. **Checks for instrument use should be made out to “AUSD”** as they are put into a special fund for only the intended purpose. Students playing large instruments such as cellos and basses, Baritones, tubas, and Bass Clarinets *may* be assigned two instruments, one for home use and one for school use, as our inventory allows. This should make the logistics of transporting these instruments much easier.

Folder Policies:

Every student will need to maintain their own three ring music binder, with sheet protectors to keep their music organized and clean. Students should not rely on their stand partner to keep track of music, but should instead bring their own organized music binder at *EVERY* class. The binder may be a previously used one. This method is also used at Foothills Middle School and Arcadia High School, so it will help our students get into this outstanding habit of being prepared and well equipped for success in music. Students will be able to reuse their folders and sheet protectors throughout the year and into next year.

**Highland Oaks School
Music Program Syllabus**

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I have read and understood the Syllabus:

Student Name (print) _____

Student Signature _____

Date _____

Parent(s) Name (print) _____

Parent Signature _____

Date _____

Parent(s) E-mail: _____