



Dunwoody High School Orchestra

Parent / Student Handbook

2024 - 2025

Michael Giel, Director of Orchestras

www.dhsorchestra.org

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MISSION STATEMENT

The Dunwoody Orchestra Program strives to offer the highest level of music education by igniting the love and curiosity of continued learning and appreciation of the musical arts for all students.

VISION STATEMENT

We believe the study of music enriches all minds and connects our spirits in musical and non-musical ways by bridging the study of the arts with math, science, history, literature, and cultures.

Dunwoody High School Orchestra Director



Michael Giel, Director of Orchestras

Michael Giel, Principal Conductor for the Capitol City Opera Company in Atlanta since 2010 is also the Associate Conductor for the Atlanta Pops Orchestra in Atlanta, GA. He is currently in his fourth season as the conductor of the LaGrange Symphony Youth Orchestra.

Michael is the Director of Orchestras at Dunwoody High School, has been a high school orchestra director for 19 years and received his Bachelor of Music Performance and Music Education from Valdosta State University and completed a Master's in Music Education from the University of Georgia. Michael also served as the Orchestra Director for the Georgia Governor's Honors Program at Valdosta State University from 2008 to 2014 and has been a clinician for the Atlanta Public, Cherokee, Dekalb, Fulton, and Muscogee County orchestra festivals.

As a violinist and violist, he has performed with several orchestras in Georgia and Florida including the Savannah Philharmonic, Gwinnett Philharmonic, Valdosta Symphony Orchestra, Ocmulgee Symphony, Gainesville (GA) Symphony, Albany (GA) Symphony, Coastal Symphony of Georgia, Rome (GA) Symphony, Atlanta Pops Orchestra, Ludwig Symphony Orchestra, Da Salo Solisti Chamber Orchestra, LaGrange Symphony, and the Central Florida Symphony. In the modern music arena, Michael has performed with and for artists such as the Trans-Siberian Orchestra, T.I., Josh Groban, Chloe Agnew (Celtic Woman), John Hopkins (Zac Brown Band), Debby Boone, Il Volo, Debbie Reynolds, Barry Manilow, Michael Bolton, Evanescence, the Oprah Winfrey Show, Sarah Brightman, Lindsay Stirling, and Il Divo.

Michael is a native of Atlanta and lives in Brookhaven with his wife Catherine who is a concert pianist and both are in a rock band called Full Service. She can be seen playing keyboard and signing while he is on stage playing the electric bass. In his spare time, Michael is an avid tennis player and outdoor enthusiast.

Contact: michael_giel@dekalbaschoolsga.org

Course Description: The Dunwoody Orchestra classes are designed to develop musical understanding through ensemble participation and individual skill development (home practice), and to build skills and musical concepts to foster a desire and love of musical performance. All classes rehearse daily during school hours. There will be possible after school rehearsals, depending on the event we are preparing for. Please check the calendar on the Dunwoody Orchestra website dhsorchestra.org. Ensembles will perform publicly several times during the school year. Some orchestras may have additional performances.

Objectives: The purpose of the orchestra program is to introduce students to higher levels of orchestral music and to develop skills on their individual instrument. Strong emphasis is put on developing music reading and musicianship skills. Areas covered in all grades at differing levels will include:

- * Correct playing position
- * Technical skills
- * Aural skills
- * Performance practices and styles
- * Music history and its historical connection to the literature
- * Music theory
- * Diverse orchestral literature appropriate for the various progressions of each ensemble
- * Chamber music skills (i.e., small ensemble)

Grading: Grades will be based on the following components:

Assessments Tasks (Skills & Homework)	25%
Classwork: Guided, Independent, or Group Practice	45%
Quizzes, Tests, & Projects	30%
TOTAL	100%

*All students will be graded aurally, orally, written, and electronically throughout each semester in Microsoft Teams..

PERFORMANCE AND CAMP PARTICIPATION

There are typically 2 to 4 concerts each semester. All concerts are GRADED EVENTS and are considered co-curricular. Students are required to participate in the entire concert. A very important part of developing as a musician is listening to and critiquing live performances. Additionally, we are a Dunwoody Orchestra team, and we support each other out of respect for our program and respect for the hard work involved in preparing and performing for our school and community. Students start with a 100 for their performance grade based on attendance, timeliness, following procedures, and performance etiquette.

Points will be deducted from the grade for the following infractions:

- **Leaving Performance Without Permission:** 50-point deduction. A ‘performance’ begins with the 1st piece of the first ensemble and ends at the conclusion of the last piece of the last ensemble. There are only 4 concerts a year that require all ensembles to listen to each other: Fall Concert, Winter Concert, March Concert, and Spring Concert. **PARENTS: PLEASE MAKE NOTE OF THIS.**
- **Uniform Infraction (missing pieces):** 10-point deduction
- **Out of Uniform** (all students must wear a Dunwoody Orchestra Uniform (refer to “Uniforms” p.10) This infraction will result in the student being removed from the ensemble and receiving a grade of zero.
- **Tardy to Call Time:** Students lose one point per minute that they are late to a dress rehearsal and concert. It is standard practice to arrive 15 minutes prior to each performance or rehearsal call time.
- **Missing Equipment/ Music** (instrument, shoulder rest, mute, etc.): 10-point deduction
- **Behavior Issues:** will be addressed by the director and deduction/punishment applied accordingly

Fortunately, we rarely have issues warranting deductions and understand that emergencies happen. The director will work to alleviate uniform, instrument, music, transportation, etc. issues brought to his attention, however it is **YOUR JOB** to prepare in advance and remember that you are a part of an orchestra team, and your team needs you on time and ready to go!

RECORDED SUBMISSIONS

Students will submit recorded assignments through Microsoft Teams. These assignments include basic musical fundamentals such as scales, arpeggios, etudes, and excerpts. All students will be expected to use their school issued chromebooks or personal electronic devices. 'Lack of a phone' or 'technical difficulties' is not grounds for a deadline extension, so don't wait until the last minute to submit your recordings!

REHEARSAL SKILLS

The **Rehearsal Skills** grade is determined by a student's ability to be prepared and have all necessary materials (instrument, music, pencil, etc.) and to take part in all in-class activities, as this is "common practice" for music ensembles. Other areas of focus are posture, bow grip, and left-hand shape [fingernails must be short enough to play with the proper left-hand shape]. In addition, a student's rehearsal etiquette is included in this grade. No food, beverage, or gum is to be permitted in the orchestra room during rehearsal.

A partial list (but not limited to) of rehearsal competency:

1. Attendance; on time to class and in seat 2 minutes after bell ready for tuning
2. Helping with set-up if needed
3. Remaining in seat while instruction is going on
4. Keeping attentive without talking, cell phone (leave in backpack), and/or playing/noise disturbance
5. Participation and following directions with a good attitude and effort (if you have to, fake it 'til you make it!)
6. Having materials: Instrument/bow in good playing condition, music, pencil, rosin, mute, extra strings, and notebook
7. Proper fingernail length (THIS IS A MUST!) All students must be able to play on the tips of their fingers.

WRITTEN AND ELECTRONIC ASSIGNMENTS

Class assignments (i.e., critiques, music theory, concert reflections, music terms, history, etc.) are primarily assigned electronically. Student assignments are given in Microsoft Teams. Each student registers in the beginning of the year for a Microsoft Teams account and is expected to submit their work electronically. There is computer access at school for a student who does not have a phone or computer at home. Please ask the director if you need assistance.

FINAL EXAM

All students will be graded at the end of each semester either aurally, written, or by both means.

Class Expectations

The following class expectations will allow us to make the most of valuable class time.

PRACTICE STANDARD

Once a student has been introduced to a specific skill, individual practice is expected to master the skill. Music students should practice a minimum of 30 minutes per day, to reinforce the material taught in class and build muscle memory. Good practice habits have a great effect on the success one will achieve not only in class, but as a life-long musician. To achieve excellence as an individual and to promote the growth of the ensemble, **DAILY PRACTICE is necessary** at home, before school, or during lunch (pack a lunch!).

COURTESY

The etiquette of an orchestra student affects not only the student, but everyone in the ensemble. Proper **rehearsal etiquette** ensures the ensemble's ability to progress during rehearsals. All students are expected to follow rehearsal guidelines as outlined by the director and should respect their fellow orchestra members. Understanding the importance of **Courtesy** within the orchestra classroom and during rehearsals will ensure success in rehearsing and performing as a TEAM. Be mindful that how you carry yourself is a representation of your standard of excellence. Additionally, conduct for a substitute should be exemplary. A substitute should be considered a guest in our room and be treated accordingly.

BEFORE SCHOOL

1. Bring your instrument and music to the orchestra room and place it in the appropriate storage area as soon as you arrive at school. Please do not leave your instrument in the hallway, or in the main room.
2. You are welcome to practice or rehearse until the first bell.
3. While in the Orchestra Room, be respectful of those rehearsing. BE QUIET if you are in the main room during rehearsals or sectionals.
4. PLEASE THROW OUT YOUR GARBAGE before leaving our 'orchestra home' and if you move chairs or Stands, please put them back in the set-up before you leave.

DURING CLASS

1. Arrive to class on time, seated in your assigned seat ready to tune at 2 minutes after the tardy bell.
2. Leave the book-bag and case in the blue-taped area in the back of the classroom.
3. Take your seat and get your instrument out and place your instrument case closed in the designated area.
4. Check the announcement screen: have all necessary materials (instrument, music, tuner, book, pencil, shoulder rest, rosin, etc.). Have materials you may need BEFORE class starts.
5. While tuning, please be silent. Noise during tuning interferes with the tuning process.
6. Practice passages taught in class that day before the next rehearsal. If you reinforce what you just learned, you will be surprised how quickly you master the skills. "Star (*)" passages needing practice during rehearsal.
7. When you neglect practice, you slow down the progress of the class and YOURSELF. Be attentive during class and follow directions the first time they are given (this is a skill!). This saves time and will make progress fast and effectively!
8. Pack up your instrument and music and return it to its appropriate space. **Cello and Bass players must loosen bows and put in endpins** and return their instrument to the rack.
9. Return to the orchestra room at the end of each day to pick up your instrument and music. If you have trouble catching the bus, the director can help you figure out a way to get your instrument.
10. NEVER touch an instrument that does not belong to you (another student's or a Dunwoody instrument). Ask your director if you have an issue with your instrument and we will take care of that. Touching another person's instrument without permission can end up with you in the school officer's office. **DON'T TAKE THAT CHANCE.**
11. **The school is not liable for instruments left overnight!**

ATTENDANCE

The Dunwoody Orchestra Calendar of Events is published in Microsoft Teams and the orchestra website at the beginning of the year for the entire year. Students are expected to participate in all rehearsals, auditions, and performances unless excused by a director. This includes any extra before or after school rehearsals. Advance notice is to be given to the director if a prior commitment conflicts with a rehearsal or performance. **A prior commitment is a date already committed to another event when the orchestra rehearsal/performance is announced**, not something more attractive that comes up a week before the rehearsal, audition, or performance. If you have a conflict, please inform a director the **next day after a rehearsal or concert date is announced**. Religious holidays or conflicts with individual religious beliefs are considered excused if the director is notified in writing by a parent. Conflicts with sports/ dance (Dunwoody or otherwise), ASYO/ GYSO/ EYSO are resolvable, if you communicate with a director **IN ADVANCE**.

All after school rehearsals, as well as concerts, are considered part of the class requirement. Good communication between the director, student, and parents can prevent misunderstandings. It is imperative that students be at all after school rehearsals and performances. Please read the following expectations carefully and contact the director with any questions:

1. WRITTEN NOTICES FROM PARENTS ARE REQUIRED FOR ALL ABSENCES OR SCHEDULE CONFLICTS. VERBAL OR WRITTEN EXCUSES FROM STUDENTS ARE NOT ACCEPTABLE.

2. ADVANCE NOTICE is required for all absences. Students and parents have access to the orchestra calendar via Charms and the Dunwoody Orchestra website. Once a rehearsal/concert is scheduled and a conflict arises, please notify the director immediately. STUDENTS ARE GIVEN AMPLE NOTIFICATION IN ORDER TO MAKE PROPER ARRANGEMENTS. Students are required to request that their work schedules be arranged to accommodate all after school rehearsals and concerts. Your employer will help you to work around required school events (see a director for help, if needed). Rehearsals/concerts take priority over work and social events. **REMEMBER THAT REHEARSALS AND CONCERTS ARE REQUIRED FOR ALL CLASSES. UNEXCUSED ABSENCES RESULT IN A LOSS FROM THE PERFORMANCE AND/OR REHEARSAL COMPETENCY PART OF A STUDENT'S GRADE AND MAY RESULT IN REMOVAL FROM THE ENSEMBLE.** With most performances, students must attend the required rehearsal(s) to be permitted to perform. Please see the director if your situation needs further attention. I understand that life can get very difficult sometimes.

3. EMERGENCIES: In the case of illness and/or family emergency, the parent should send a written notice to the orchestra director as soon as they are aware that such a situation exists. If it is an emergency (i.e., something that happens 30 minutes before the rehearsal is to begin) it may be impossible to get in touch with the director. Therefore, please follow this up with a written note as soon as possible after the fact. **THIS IS THE ONLY CATEGORY WHERE ABSENCES WILL BE EXCUSED THE SAME DAY, OR AFTER THE EVENT.**

4. RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS: Conflicts with individual religious beliefs are considered excused, given advance notice. Please notify a director with a written note as soon as you are aware that a conflict exists. There will be an assigned project to make up the grade. The director will assign the parameters and topics.

5. EXCUSED ABSENCES: To receive a grade for an EXCUSED absence from a rehearsal or performance, it is the student's responsibility to see the director to make up the missed rehearsal/ performance. This assignment can be (but not limited to) a report, a project, or recording submission. **NO ASSIGNMENT WILL BE ACCEPTED AFTER TWO WEEKS FROM THE DATE OF THE MISSED REHEARSAL OR CONCERT. THE STUDENT WILL NOT RECEIVE CREDIT FOR THE GRADE IF IT IS LATE. **NOTE** PLEASE COMMUNICATE DIRECTLY WITH THE DIRECTOR IF THERE ARE INDIVIDUAL OR UNUSUAL CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH MAY BE A PROBLEM.**

6. **UNEXCUSED ABSENCES:** Unexcused absences affect the morale of the entire orchestra. Although it would be impossible to include a complete list, the following items are examples of unexcused absences:

1. Too much homework
2. Transportation: This refers to the student who fails to arrange transportation in advance.
3. Club meeting at school (this is resolvable with prior notification)
4. Falling asleep and did not hear alarm
5. Forgetting instrument and/or music
6. Failure to request time off from job
7. Reporting to the wrong location or school
8. Going on a trip or an outside event during the concert window

Make-up for Excused Absences: If a student misses a required camp, rehearsal, audition, or performance for any reason, they must schedule an appointment with the director to plan a make-up assignment. **THIS IS FOR EXCUSED ABSENCES ONLY.** Because the orchestra is a large group/team ensemble, please understand that missing a performance impacts all the students in the ensemble who have worked incredibly hard to prepare for their performance. Every student is highly valued, and we understand that there are unforeseeable emergencies (i.e., death in the family, illness, etc.). Again, communication with the director is the key to our success as an orchestra family.

EQUIPMENT LIST

This is a list of important items needed for orchestra class. It is necessary that you have these items by the second week of school. Most music stores in the area will have these items in stock but call before you make the trip.

1. **Instrument.** Please take the time to have your instrument checked for adjustment and size where it was rented/purchased. A new set of strings may also be in order (should be replaced at least yearly). Please replace *Super Sensitive* strings with the Thomastik *Dominant* strings or better. Save old strings in case yours break. A poorly functioning instrument will slow progress. Bow hair should be clean and full. Please have your bow rehaired if it has not been re-haired recently. Proper maintenance is REQUIRED. Each student **must have a nametag on the instrument case! ALL CASES MUST BE LABELED WITH A STUDENT'S FIRST AND LAST NAME.**
2. **Tuner app.** You should download a tuning app on your phone. There are some excellent tuners available for your phone. We will be using these regularly in class.
3. **Pencil.** Brought to class every day!
4. **Shoulder rest** for viola and violin players. This is an absolute necessity for proper technique and posture. Recommended models are Everest, Wolf, or similar styles. You get what you pay for, and some of the cheap shoulder rests are junk and do not stay on the instrument well.
5. **Rock stop** for cello and bass players for home use and concerts.
6. **Rosin**
7. **Extra set of strings** for your instrument. STRINGS BREAK!
8. **Metal folding stand** for home practice and trips. This is also important to ensure good posture.
9. **Soft cloth** to keep the instrument clean. Old T-shirts work fine. Never put water or soap on any instrument. WIPE OFF STRINGS. Rosin builds up and sounds terrible and harms the finish on your instrument.

REPAIRS

If your instrument needs repair at a music repair facility, please request the repair shop to **provide you with a loaner instrument** that you may use while your instrument is being repaired. This is critical so that you may continue to receive credit for participating in class daily.

These are all important items that the school system does not supply. Except for the folding stand and rock stop, these items must be brought to class every day. Please replace these items as needed. Having these materials in class is necessary to participate in the class. Please let your director know if you cannot afford an item.

Uniforms

Dunwoody Orchestra Uniforms:

There are 2 uniforms used during the year: Formal Attire for concerts and the Dunwoody Orchestra t-shirt for a more casual setting such as performances at school, field trips, and non-formal concerts.

FORMAL ORCHESTRA UNIFORM INFORMATION

GENTLEMEN: Gentlemen will wear all black. This includes tucked in black button-down dress shirts, black dress pants, long calf length black dress socks, black belt, and black dress shoes. Please see Mr. Giel with any uniform questions.

LADIES: Ladies will wear all black. Shirt and Pants Outfits or Dresses are acceptable. This includes tucked in black button-down dress shirts, black dress pants or solid black dresses that are ankle length with black closed toe dress shoes. Please see Mr. Giel with any uniform questions.

CASUAL UNIFORM INFORMATION

The Casual attire is the Dunwoody High School Orchestra t-shirt. T-shirt information and orders occur at the beginning of the year. The t-shirts are worn during group activities and for less formal concerts. For pricing and ordering information click the "For Parents and Students" tab on the DHSOA website.

Dunwoody High School Orchestra Association (DHSOA)

Our Mission

DHSOA is a non-profit 501(c)(3) booster organization established to:

Support the Dunwoody High School Orchestra Program

Enhance music education

Communicate with parents

Encourage students at all levels of participation

DHSOA accomplishes this by:

Supporting the Orchestra and its directors through fundraising efforts

Enhancing the Orchestra Program by providing orchestra and Sectional Clinics

Organizing Camps, Master Classes, supplemental educational and performance opportunities

Communicating through the dhsorchestra.org website in general and through the newsletter, Facebook page, and email correspondence.

DHSOA Membership Fee

As a co-curricular activity at Dunwoody High School, the Orchestra program has a small annual Membership Fee. Payment makes you a member of the Dunwoody High School Orchestra Association (DHSOA). These fees have been established to help offset the costs associated with running an award-winning, nationally recognized program that seeks to improve each student's musicianship. DeKalb County only provides funds for a small portion of our expenses, but the DHSOA depends on your donations to keep the program running effectively and give all students enrichment and learning opportunities in orchestra. There are also a few consumable items that all students use that must be periodically purchased or replaced, and the orchestra does not get funds from the county for these items.

***The Membership Fee should be paid in full by August 23, 2024. Payment plans and alternative fundraising opportunities are available to assist families with covering the fees.

Please contact Michael Giel (michael_giel@dekalbschoolsga.org) with questions. ***

The Membership Fee includes:

Supplemental instruction through workshops, clinics, and fall/winter camps

Equipment such as tuners, shoulder rests, batteries, rock stops, rosin, etc.

Yearly purchase of new music

Guest instructors, performers, or clinicians

Bus transportation on some orchestra field trips

Entry fees for performance evaluation or other performances

Fees for performance sites and maintenance

Student recognition awards – certificates, medals, and orchestra letters

Food on competition days, for workshops, and hospitality events

Assist with purchases of new instruments and equip

Plus, many more miscellaneous expenses

Did You Know...?

...that if every Orchestra family paid the minimum Membership Fee of \$75, DHSOA would not have to do any fundraising for the year? Our budget would be covered through the generous financial support of our committed families

...that if every Orchestra family joins as members (100% participation), we can qualify for corporate grants?

...that the Orchestra program receives only \$2000 from the county? This amount covers the Orchestra directors' basic office supplies, classroom supplies, and technology, but NOT clinicians, camps, nor any other events and activities that greatly enhance our students' music education.

...that county dollars are a separate fund and not applied towards the DHSOA's \$10,000 operating budget? The DHSOA provides the means to pay for enrichment above and beyond the regular classroom activities -- professional clinicians for sectionals, master classes, and fall/winter camps; social and team building events; supplemental educational and performance opportunities; specialized tools and equipment; instrument repairs (easily a couple of thousand dollars, primarily for cellos and basses); music, method books, and instructional materials; and more!

Invest in your Child's Music Education

We need your help. Your involvement is essential for this incredible Orchestra Program to be successful.

Let's work together to provide high quality programming that our Orchestra deserves. Your Membership Fee will help us achieve our goals.

Fundraising

Fundraising for the Orchestra is primarily dependent upon participation in the Dunwoody High School Orchestra Association by paying fees. The balance of funds needed to fund the Orchestra program are supplemented by our Family Patron and Business Sponsorship programs and our popular and successful Poinsettia Fundraising Event every November.

Class Codes:

Remind: Text 81010 with the subject listed below for your class

2nd Period Orchestra Fall 2024: @dhs2ndfall

3rd Period Orchestra Fall 2024: @dhs3rdfall

1st Period Orchestra Spring 2025: @dhs1st25

2nd Period Orchestra Spring 2025: @dhs2nd25

Chamber Orchestra: @dhscham25

Syllabus/ Handbook Acceptance:

QR Code:



Calendar of Events

2024-25 Dunwoody H.S. Orchestra Schedule

(Subject to change...parents and students will be notified in a timely manner)

Date and Time	Event	Location/Comment	People Involved
Friday, August 9, In Class	Metronome Day	DHS Orchestra Room	All Students
Wednesday, September 4, 3:00 pm	All State \$ Due by 12:00 pm	DHS Orchestra Room	Select Students
Thursday, September 12, 3:30 pm	HOMECOMING PARADE MARCH	Vermack Road	Select Students
Wednesday, October 9, 6:30pm	FALL PERFORMANCE	DHS Theater	All DHS Students
Saturday, October 19, All day	All State Auditions	Kittredge Magnet School	Select Students
Monday, November 11, 1st and 2nd Period	VETERANS DAY PERFORMANCE	DHS CAFETERIA	All DHS Students
Wednesday, December 11, 6:30pm	WINTER PERFORMANCE	DHS Theater	All DHS Students
Saturday, January 18, Times TBA	All State Final Audition	Riverwood International School	Select Students
Thursday - Saturday, Feb 27 - March 1, All Day	All-State Orchestra	Athens, GA	Select Students
Wednesday, March 26, 6:30 pm	MARCH PERFORMANCE	DHS Theater	All DHS Students
Wednesday, May 7, 6:30 pm	SPRING PERFORMANCE	DHS Theater	All DHS & PMS Students
Monday, May 12, 6:00 pm	Spring Banquet	DHS Cafeteria	Select Students

ALL BOLD-FACED EVENTS ARE MANDATORY AND GRADED EVENTS.

Please keep up to date with DHSOA trips, events, concerts, and rehearsals using our real-time calendar at

<https://www.dhsorchestra.org/calendar-of-events>