

# The Orchestra at Mary Passage Middle School

## Syllabus – Beginner Orchestra

### 2018-2019 School Year

*Welcome to the Orchestra Family!* I am greatly looking forward to working with you during the upcoming school year! This syllabus will outline the school year, the expectations, and all that you need to know to be ready to be in Orchestra this year.

This syllabus is a small document that references portions of the Music Department Handbook that are most important to your participation in Orchestra. Please be sure to reference the handbook for more detailed information. The Music Department Handbook can be found on the Passage Music Website at <http://www.passagemusic.org/handbook>.

In the meantime, if you need anything throughout the year, please feel free to contact me at anytime! Email and text message are best, but you are welcome to call me as well! I am looking forward to working with each of you this year!

Musically Yours,

**Shawn M. Roberts**, Director of Orchestras  
Mary L. Passage Middle School

#### Contact Information

Desk Phone: (757) 886-7600 ext. 49203  
After-Hours: (757) 528-2033 (also text message)  
Email: [shawn.roberts@nn.k12.va.us](mailto:shawn.roberts@nn.k12.va.us)  
Instagram: @passagemSORchestra

**Music is Hard! ...and that's okay!** The first thing we will be learning about will be self-discipline and ethical behavior. This is the foundation needed to learn any musical instrument. On top of that, we will learn the basics needed to become musicians. The Orchestra at Passage Middle School emphasizes the development of student musicians through string instrument instruction. Students not only become violinists, violists, cellists, and bassists, but rather become full-fledged musicians through learning those instruments. For more information on introductions of who is who, please see the *Introductions* section of the handbook by visiting: <http://www.passagemusic.org/hb-introductions>.

**Student Records and Expectations.** All Orchestra students and families are required to set-up a Charms account. In addition, all students are assigned a Google Classroom account, which they will use at school and outside of school for Orchestra. Finally, Mr. Roberts will utilize School Tag to communicate via text message and email. You can download the School Tag app through the Apple iStore and Google Play Store.

*In terms of expectations, Mr. Roberts* will set deadlines on all forms that are to be turned in, and commits to giving students and families as much time as possible to turn forms in. *Students* are required to communicate all important information with their parents, as well as giving all letters, memos, and permission forms to their parents the day they are distributed. *Parents* are required to submit all paperwork and/or payments by the deadline, and agree that students who do not turn-in paperwork and/or money by the deadline without previously communicating with Mr. Roberts are indicating that their child will not participate in whatever the paperwork is for. Please see the *Student Records and Expectations* section for more information by visiting: <http://www.passagemusic.org/hb-records>.

**Instrument & Supplies.** Students are responsible for either acquiring their own instrument or renting an instrument from NNPS. **Students / Parents should NOT purchase their own instrument without communicating with Mr. Roberts first.** See the Appendix in the handbook for more information. Mr. Roberts reserves the right to disallow an instrument from performances due to color or quality, so please do not purchase an instrument without talking to Mr. Roberts.

Mr. Roberts is professionally trained to tune instruments, assess damages, and make minor repairs. By signing the Membership Agreement Form, you agree to allow Mr. Roberts to tune and make minor repairs to your instrument. All damaged instruments, personal or NNPS should be brought to Mr. Roberts for damage assessment. NNPS will be sent to the shop through their channels. Student owned instruments should only be brought to the shop after a damage assessment has been completed by Mr. Roberts. More information regarding instruments can be found at: <http://www.passagemusic.org/hb-instruments-supplies>.

**Supplies.** The following supplies should be brought to school everyday. Descriptions of these supplies can be found on the *Supplies* page, which can be found at: <http://www.passagemusic.org/supplies>.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• ONE INCH SOLID BLACK Binder</li><li>• Sheet Music (one set provided by Director)</li><li>• Pencil</li><li>• Wiping Cloth (soft wash cloth)</li><li>• Wire Music Stand (optional for home)</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Chromatic Tuner: Intermediate / Advanced Students (See the <a href="#">Supplies Page</a> on the music website for more information)</li><li>• Shoulder Rest: Violins / Violas (Kun or Everest Band Recommended)</li><li>• Rock Stop: Cellos / Basses</li></ul> |
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**Fees and Payments.** Beginning of the Year fees for Beginner Musicians include the following:

Participation Fee: \$10.00	Polo Shirt Fee: \$15.00	Rental Fee: \$35.00
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**Beginning of the Year Fees** are due by **Thursday, September 13, 2018**. Please note that no student will be excluded from Orchestra due to an inability to pay. However, **it is required that parents who cannot pay their fees in full by the due date should communicate with Mr. Roberts as soon as possible to make the appropriate arrangements.**

**Spring Trip Fees.** An opportunity will be provided for our Beginner Orchestra to take a Spring Trip, which will include an adjudicated competition performance, and a trip to Busch Gardens. Because this trip has a cost, it is optional. Fees will be assessed for those going on the trip, and a deposit and final balance payment will be due. More information about this trip will be sent home in January.

**No Refund Policy.** Regardless of the fee being paid, it is important for all of our families to understand that all payments made are non-refundable, except where required by NNPS Policy (i.e. Instrument Rental Fee). More information regarding fees and payments can be found by visiting: <http://www.passagemusic.org/hb-fees-and-payments>.

**Musician Expectations.** Orchestra musicians are expected to...

- ...be prepared daily with their instrument, binder, and supplies
- ...practice, at-home, for the amount of time necessary to be prepared for class everyday
- ...strive to perfect performance skills by following the director's instructions in and out of the classroom
- ...enter the classroom / stage, remove their instrument from the case, be seated, place their music on their stand, follow the tuning procedure and then warming up
- ...become silent when the Director takes the podium at the beginning of class / rehearsal.
- ...become silent when the conductor cuts off the orchestra, and remain silent when the conductor gives instructions
- ...follow appropriate rehearsal etiquette: raising a hand to speak, being respectful to all instruments, and be respectful to the music selections.
- ...upon dismissal, pack up instrument, flip over music stand, and leave the classroom quietly.
- ...be present and timely for all performances, rehearsals, and events they are scheduled to attend.

**Grading Policies.** Students will earn their Orchestra grade based on the following criteria:

Participation: 20% Students earn their daily grade based on having their instrument, having their supplies, and fully participating in class.	After-School Rehearsals & Projects: 10% Students earn their grade by attending mandatory after-school rehearsals. A project is assigned in marking periods where no after-school rehearsals are held.	Playing/Written Tests & Quizzes: 30% Playing and written tests and quizzes are held throughout each marking period. In addition, tests/quizzes will be utilized to assess at-home practice.	Performances: 40% Performances are held throughout the year and are required. Please see the <i>Grading Policies</i> section of the handbook online by visiting the link below.
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More in-depth information can be found by visiting: <http://www.passagemusic.org/hb-grades>

**At-Home Practice.** Students are required to practice at least five nights per week for as much time necessary to be prepared for the next class period. Practice is assessed throughout the marking period in the form of an announced, or unannounced playing quiz or test. 6th Graders should generally practice for 20 minutes per night while 7th Graders should generally practice for 25 minutes per night. These are minimum time periods, and some evenings may require more practice, especially as we get closer to performances.

**Performances.** Performance is the culmination of all of the hard work that your child has contributed during classes, rehearsals, and their practice at home. **The performance experience cannot be recreated**, so it is important that every musician attend every performance in which they are scheduled. *Because audience etiquette is part of their grade, students are expected to stay for the entire performance and may not leave until all ensembles have performed.*

**Dress Rehearsals:** Dress rehearsals are the final opportunity for us to see what the performance is going to sound like. Missing so much as one student can change the entire sound of the ensemble. In addition, students missing will not receive the final instructions for the performance. Therefore, in order to ensure the appropriate performance, and to refrain from any embarrassment of the student, students who miss the dress rehearsal will sit in the last chair of their section. This is not punitive, but rather, to protect the student and ensure the highest level of success for the ensemble.

**Attire:** Attire may vary from performance to performance. The standard (default) attire is:

- **Gentlemen:** Performance polo shirt with black dress slacks and a black belt. Black dress socks and black dress shoes should be worn.
- **Ladies:** Performance polo shirt with black dress slacks or a black skirt (length below the knee). It is highly recommended that ladies who play the cello and bass clarinet wear black dress pants. Black dress socks or stockings and black dress shoes should be worn. Black stockings must be worn with a skirt.
- **Gentlemen & Ladies:** Earrings must be smaller than the size of a quarter. Students may not wear more than two bracelets on each wrist (with a watch counting as one bracelet). Students may wear no visible neck jewelry. Students are to refrain from wearing anything that may draw attention to themselves (i.e. neon jewelry). Accessories may be worn only at the Director's discretion.

Attendance guidelines, including information on excused and unexcused absences, can be found in the *Music Handbook*, by visiting: <http://www.passagemusic.org/hb-performances>.

**Alternative Assignments.** When a student is absent from a performance, they earn a grade of "0." Upon completion of the alternative assignment, the grade will be updated. Because performances account for 40% of the overall grade, it is important to complete the alternative assignment within five days of the performance, and it is the student's responsibility to do so, without further reminders. The alternative assignment makes up 100% of the grade if the absence is excused and 50% if unexcused. Further make-up projects may be completed to make-up the other 50% if unexcused. Make-up projects and the alternative assignment can be found at: <http://www.passagemusic.org/hb-appendix-a>.

# 2018-2019 Music Department Membership Agreement Form

Please visit <http://passagemusic.org/handbook> to download and read the handbook. After downloading and reading the handbook from the Passage Music Website, please complete the membership agreement form below. This form must be turned in within the first week of school! We look forward to working with you and your child this school year!

## Student's School Information

Student's Name:		Ensemble: Circle the appropriate ensemble Band                      Chorus                      Orchestra
Do you have access to the internet? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		Polo Shirt Size (Adult Sizes-circle one): S   M   L   XL   XXL
Grade Level:	Level (circle one): Beginner      Returner	Homeroom Teacher:

## Student's Home Information

Have you logged-in to your Charms Office account and verified all information is correct? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes    No: <i>If you have not signed-in yet, please follow the directions to the right and then check "Yes." If you cannot log-in to Charms Office, please indicate the reason here:</i> _____ _____ _____	<b>IMPORTANT: Please log-in to Charms Office and verify all of your information is correct</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Go to <a href="http://www.charmsoffice.com">http://www.charmsoffice.com</a>, then scroll over "Enter / Log-in" and select Parents/Students/Members</li> <li>Enter the school code: <b>passagemusic</b> and then enter your <b>NNPS Student ID number</b> as your password (first time only)</li> <li>The system will ask you to create a new password, which must be unique from other users. Once you have created a unique password, you can sign-in to the system.</li> <li>Once you are in the system, select the <b>Student Info</b> icon at the top of the page, and then select <b>Personal Information</b>.</li> <li>Please provide as much information as possible, especially, email addresses, phone numbers, mailing addresses, parent names, and any other contact information.</li> </ul>
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## Parent's Information

Parents'/Guardians' Name(s):	Parents'/Guardians' Name(s):
Cell Phone Number: _____ <b>IMPORTANT:</b> We will be utilizing online apps to send out text messages this year. By giving us your cell phone number, you give us permission to add your number to our database, and will receive text messages from us throughout the year. If you do not want us to text important updates to you throughout the year, please contact your child's director to let them know.	Cell Phone Number: _____ <b>IMPORTANT:</b> We will be utilizing online apps to send out text messages this year. By giving us your cell phone number, you give us permission to add your number to our database, and will receive text messages from us throughout the year. If you do not want us to text important updates to you throughout the year, please contact your child's director to let them know.
Email Address(es):	Email Address(es):

## Agreement

**Student:** By signing below, I understand that I am fully committing to being a part of this Band, Chorus, or Orchestra and will abide by all policies and procedures of the Music Program at Passage Middle School. I will take my responsibility to my ensemble seriously, and promise to communicate all necessary information to my parent(s)/guardian(s), including: after-school rehearsals, performances, fundraiser, off-campus trips, field trips, and any other information that my Director instructs for me to communicate with my parent(s)/guardian(s).

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent/Guardian:** By signing below, I acknowledge that I have received information to access the *Music Department Handbook*, and I acknowledge that my child will be held accountable to the policies and procedures set forth in that handbook. I have completed this membership agreement form and confirm that all information is correct. I give my child permission to participate in all rehearsals, after-school rehearsals, performances, field trips, off-campus trips and events for the entirety of the school year, and commit to ensuring they are present at all dress rehearsals and performances unless excused according to the guidelines in the *Music Department Handbook*. Should I have any questions regarding my child's participation in the Music Program, I will notify the Director prior to signing this form.

Parent's/Guardian's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_