September, 2018

Dear Junior High Orchestra members and parents,

Welcome to the St. Martin de Porres Orchestra program!

**Class Goals:**

♫ Play your chosen string instrument with the best posture, tone, intonation and technique possible. Work

to achieve a relaxed physical fluency while playing

♫ Improve musical notation reading skills

♫ Play ensemble repertoire in a collaborative, respectful and supportive environment

♫ Foster dedication, tenacity, collaboration, respect and personal responsibility in every member

♫ Prepare students for concerts and other performance opportunities

♫ Have a great time making and sharing great music with great people!

**Orchestra Class:** Orchestra meets every day of the week for a whole-group rehearsal class. In addition to the rehearsal class, students will also attend a pull-out lesson once every week which will allow for more individualized instruction.

**Lessons:** In addition to the rehearsal class, students will also attend a pull-out lesson once every week which will allow for more individualized instruction. It is the **student's responsibility** to make up any missed worked from the class they were pulled from.  Students are expected to check the schedule and notify Mrs. Spitaliere BEFORE missing a lesson if they have a conflict during their scheduled lesson period (such as a test in class).  Lesson attendance is an important part of a student's orchestra grade, so it is essential that students are prepared by practicing at home and attending their lessons on time and with their books, music and instrument.  Students who are absent on their lesson day should speak with Mrs. Spitaliere to schedule a make-up lesson to avoid a negative impact on their orchestra grade.  If a student is asked to leave a lesson due to behavior concerns, they will take a zero for the day’s lesson grade- this grade can NOT be made up.

**Instruments: All students will need an appropriately sized instrument.** An instrument that is too big or too small will be uncomfortable and difficult to play and may lead to frustration and pain.  Playing on the correct sized instrument is very important! **I will assess students at the start of the year to make sure they are using the correct size.**

**Violin and viola students will be expected to bring their instruments to school for rehearsals and lessons, and home to practice. Cello and bass students will have access to school instruments for rehearsal and lessons, but should bring home instruments to school once a month for tuning and maintenance.**

**Students who do not own their own instrument may rent an instrument from the school or from an independent music store.  For rental costs and payment for school instruments, please contact the front office for assistance. You are responsible for the care and maintenance of your instrument. If you are interested in purchasing an instrument, please contact me first for assistance.**

**Grading for Orchestra will be based on the following:**

♫ Lesson attendance, effort and preparation

♫ Rehearsal etiquette, effort and preparation

♫ Classwork and homework assignments

♫ Periodic playing and written assessments

♫ Concert performance and demeanor

**Practicing:** Practicing is the required homework for Orchestra.  Practicing at home is how you prepare for class rehearsals, group lessons and concerts.  The more effort you put into your practicing at home, the faster you will see progress and growth! All students are expected to practice **5-6 days a week**, working towards 30+ minutes per practice session.  If you are very busy, it is better to practice for a little **every day**, rather than skip several days and try to do a 'cram session' the day before your lesson.

## Try to create a ****routine**** for your practicing.  Find a time of the day that works for you and try to make it your habit to practice at the same time every day! Students should work on concert music, lesson materials and fun stuff! Set yourself up for success- create a practice space that is free of distractions.  Make sure you are using a music stand and a proper chair so you are practicing with your best posture possible.

## Parental supervision and support to develop good practice habits is highly encouraged! Parents should feel free to ask students what they are working on and if they can listen to a few minutes at the end of a practice session.

**Supplies-The following supplies are required to be considered ‘prepared’ for rehearsals and lessons.**

♫  **Instrument**(correctly sized).

♫ **Lessons workbook**- one copy will be provided each student by St. Martin's, but it is your  responsibility

to take care of it.  You will need to purchase a replacement if you lose your book.  
♫  **Binder**(1-inch, hard cover with dividers) **– or folder** to hold your music and class work   
♫ **Concert music**  
♫ **Pencils**

♫ **Small washcloth or rag-** to keep your instrument clean  
♫ **Rosin-** for your bow.  One will be provided.  Any replacements rosin is your responsibility.   
♫ **Sponge or shoulder rest**(Violin/Viola only)-to promote proper playing posture, improve intonation and

avoid back/neck injury.  Students will be provided with a sponge.  As students progress, I highly

recommend purchasing an adjustable **shoulder rest.**Please be aware that they are sold for violin

AND viola, and come in different sizes, so check to make sure your purchase the correct size for your

instrument.

**The following is a list of highly recommended supplies to help with practice at home:**

♫**Dedicated practice space**, free of distractions  
 ♫**Proper chair**- to support correct posture during home practice

♫ **Music Stand-** A music stand is a must to help maintain proper posture and playing technique while

practicing at home

♫ **Full length mirror**- in practice space to check posture while playing  
 ♫ **End pin strap or rock stop**(cello and bass only).  Absolute necessity for maintaining correct posture at

home if practicing.  Not needed if you will be practicing on a carpeted floor.

♫ **Tuner-**Tuners help keep home instruments in tune and trains young musicians to play more in tune.

♫ **Metronome-**A great tool to improve your ability to play with a steady tempo and your rhythmic accuracy.

**Concerts:** All students are expected to participate in both the Christmas and the Spring Concerts. Concerts are held at Kellenberg Memorial High School, 1400 Glenn Curtiss Boulevard, Uniondale, NY 11553. Concert dress for both performances is our standard school uniform.

♫ **Christmas Concert – TUESDAY, December 11th at 7:00**   
♫ **Spring Concert - THURSDAY, May 2nd at 7:00**

**Contact:** Please take a moment to browse my class **website** for further information. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at any time. I look forward to hearing from you!

http://smmsorchestra.weebly.com

Lspitaliere@stmartinmarianist.org

 (516) 481-3303

I am looking forward to a great year of music and learning with you!

Sincerely,

Mrs. Spitaliere

**SMMS Orchestra Guidelines and Information**

**Confirmation of Receipt**

I have read and understand the attached guidelines. I am aware of the course requirements and commitments and have marked my calendar with all important dates.

Student Signature Student Name (please print) Date

Parent/Guardian Signature Parent/Guardian Name (please print) Date

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Best phone number to reach parent/guardian Parent/Guardian email address

*(\*Please circle your preferred method of contact)*

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

Student’s birth date

Any other information you would like me to have about your child to help ensure the best possible year in orchestra?

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**\*\*Please detach this form and return to Mrs. Spitaliere no later than Wednesday, September 12th, 2018.\*\***