

Course Expectations (All Orchestras)

Music study is meant to awaken the artist in the individual, as well as to encourage full participation in the group. As the Signature School for the Performing Arts in Reno, DRHS students hold themselves to a high standard, both in and outside of class. For a successful ensemble performance, all music students must exhibit integrity on behalf of the music and their peers. Students in the Damonte Ranch Orchestras are expected to:

- **Be early to rehearsal.** You are asked to be in your seat, warming up with your instrument at least five minutes before rehearsal starts. This is important professional behavior: *“To be early is to be on time, to be on time is to be late, and to be late is to be unacceptable.”*
- **Always come to rehearsal prepared,** with your instrument and all necessary accessories (music, pencil, rosin, rock stop, extra strings, etc). Students who are unprepared for class in this way will receive the same grade as if they had an unexcused absence, and will still be expected to sit in class and be attentive. Points lost in this way cannot be made up.
- **Play musically,** showing with the quality of your work that you have come prepared for class. Instead of practice logs, in the DRHS Orchestras you are entrusted with the responsibility of practicing hard, and practicing well, on your own terms. Show initiative, and be a leader in your section. *“Practice makes permanent.”*
- **Attend all weekly sectionals** at the scheduled time (usually during Instructional Center/Freshman Seminar or during lunch). Any absence must be brought to the teacher's attention beforehand to be excused. Excused absences can be made up by practicing independently or by scheduling a lesson with Mr. Steptoe. Unexcused absences cannot be made up. Chamber and Sinfonia Orchestra members are obligated to attend DRSO rehearsals and performances.
- **Attend all concerts and dress rehearsals.** This is a performance-based ensemble class. Any missed concert or dress rehearsal, for any reason, will result in one full letter grade being deducted from the student's semester grade. Students who were excused by the director for such an absence may be eligible to make up missing points. Parents and students may want to mark down concert dates on their family calendars to avoid conflicts.
- **Perform on a quality instrument** suitable for a high school student. Mr. Steptoe can arrange instrument rentals and can give recommendations for purchasing an appropriate instrument. Rental Fee waivers can be provided for students in need.
- **Use extra resources to help in your learning.** From metronomes, tuning forks, and composition notebooks to private lessons, live concerts, and the Internet, there are many options to choose from in order to enrich your high school music experience. Whatever your playing level, the choices you make define you – as it is with life. Choose to grow.

Grading Policy (All Orchestras)

This grading policy is meant to reduce stress on the student and encourage self-motivation as a member of a community of artists.

A – Has exceeded course expectations for a Damonte Ranch High School orchestra student. Completion of Independent Study project required. (One project per semester - see below.)

B – Has satisfied course expectations in orchestra. Has attended all (or nearly all, if excused) rehearsals, sectionals, and DRSO practices. Has demonstrated sufficient musical and technical progress.

C – Has struggled to satisfy course expectations. Intermittent attendance at weekly sectionals or additional rehearsals. Has demonstrated minimal musical and technical progress. Student/teacher conference may be required.

D or F – Has failed to satisfy course expectations. Has not demonstrated noticeable musical or technical progress and has elected not to rectify the situation. Parent/teacher conference required. Depending on the situation, the student may be able to make up some of his or her grade – ask teacher for clarification.

Independent Study (All Orchestras)

This project is a requirement for a semester grade of an “A” and counts as a component of your final exam. Students may choose to complete one of the options below, or are welcome to consult with the teacher to come up with creative projects of their own.

- Perform a solo on a recital (with piano accompaniment, if appropriate). At least two lessons with the teacher may be required.
- Write a research paper on a composer whose music is being performed, and present an essay on the composer and his/her music during an orchestra concert.
- Perform as part of a chamber group. At least two group coachings with the teacher may be required.
- Attend two orchestra concerts and bring back programs. Write an essay comparing the two performances.
- Compose, rehearse, and premiere your composition (solo, chamber, or orchestral).
- Put together a presentation on some aspect of musical history, performance, or interest (with instructor approval).