

# RDYO Family Handbook

INFORMATION FOR PLAYERS AND FAMILIES

[WWW.RDYO.CA](http://WWW.RDYO.CA)



Richmond  
Delta  
Youth  
Orchestra

*Come play with us!*

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*Note: The Membership Commitments and Code of Conduct that you read and signed when you registered is excerpted from the RDYO Family Handbook.*

# WELCOME & GENERAL INFORMATION

Welcome to the Richmond Delta Youth Orchestra! We are delighted to welcome new and returning musicians to our Orchestra family. We invite parents and musicians to review the membership commitments outlined here, to increase your understanding of what is involved in youth orchestra participation.

While this document reflects some of the changes we have made for the safety and health of our musicians, staff, and their families, please refer to our [COVID-19 information webpage](#) for specific details. We continue to monitor the restrictions and guidelines, and will maintain the most up to date information on the website.

## Overview

The Richmond Delta Youth Orchestra (RDYO) is a professional orchestral preparation program for young musicians, providing instruction and performance opportunities in an ensemble setting. Founded in 1971, the Delta Youth Orchestra operated in Ladner until 2013. The Orchestra changed its name to the Richmond Delta Youth Orchestra to reflect its growing membership from the City of Richmond and its base move to Richmond. Today, RDYO comprises seven divisions and enrolls over 130 young musicians from all over Metro Vancouver. RDYO has a rich history of offering public performances at outreach concerts and events throughout the Lower Mainland.

RDYO operates two programs:

**Symphony Orchestra Program (SOP):** Operating since 1971, there are approximately 130 students (aged 6 to 18) registered in this leveled program. Levels progress from Junior Strings and Junior Winds (introductory level) through to Symphony (senior level). Instruction is available for string, wind, brass, and percussion students, all in an ensemble setting. **Chamber Ensemble Program (CEP):** There are approximately 15 students registered in this program, CEP provides enriched instruction for our most promising young string musicians, in quartet and in chamber orchestra formats. CEP was established more than 10 years ago. Before the pandemic, RDYO offered our wind players the opportunity to join the Jazz ensemble as part of the Chamber Ensemble Program. Due to low enrollment and funding constraints during the pandemic, it has not been feasible to sustain this program. Therefore, one of our overarching goals for this coming season is to reinstate CEP for our high-performance oriented young musicians.

RDYO's goals are to:

Foster the development of knowledge, appreciation and ability in an ensemble/orchestral music setting through weekly rehearsals and concert performances

Retain qualified conductors who share their passion and knowledge of classical music with the next generation of young musicians through dedicated instruction and positive communication

Encourage young musicians to discover their musical identities through ensemble playing as they gain more confidence in their skills and fine tune their performance abilities

Provide high quality musical training to students with both benefits and opportunities to develop musically through bursaries, scholarships and camps

Implement leadership opportunities that support students to become pillars in their community through participation, accountability and teamwork

Develop a deeper understanding and appreciation of orchestral music beyond a school setting to prepare students for a future in music

RDYO has had wonderful success in preparing young musicians for post-secondary education which lead professional careers. Several RDYO alumni play in professional or community orchestras, including the Richmond Orchestra, the Vancouver Academy of Music, the Ottawa Symphony, and the National Arts Centre Orchestra. RDYO is fortunate to have two RDYO alumni as sessional staff. Our musicians acknowledge the need to give back to their community in order for music appreciation and education to have a deeper reach in our society. Others go on to be loyal patrons of the performing arts throughout their lives, ensuring that future generations of musicians have an appreciative audience.

RDYO's mandate is to provide unique and enriching musical instruction to children and youth while nurturing a safe, growing community for students to share their passion for classical music. The majority of our members start in the junior levels and stay with the organization until Symphony Orchestra. The orchestra's success is due to the strengths of our unique program offerings which offer us a steady retention rate that serves the RDYO's mission: to serve our communities with inspired musical performances through a strong foundation of musical education in an ensemble setting for youth.

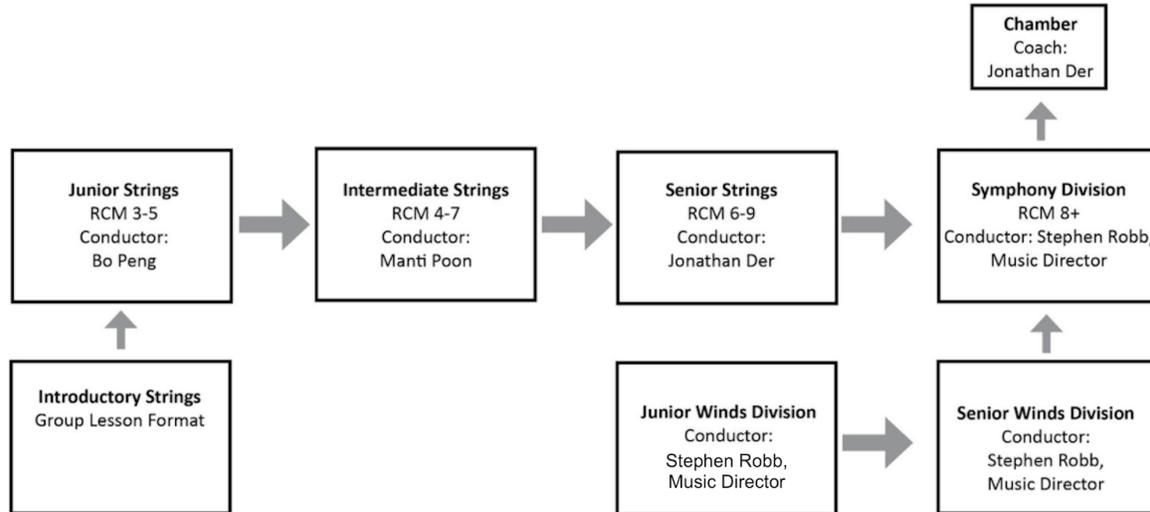
## Structure of the Orchestra

Presently the Orchestra consists of seven divisions with approximately 135 players. The divisions are:

- Junior Strings
- Intermediate Strings
- Senior Strings
- Symphony
- Chamber
- Junior Winds
- Senior Winds

Typically, players will spend two years in each division. The flow from one division to the next is represented in the diagram, below. The Royal Conservatory of Music (RCM) levels indicated are

guidelines, and by design there is overlap between divisions. This allows conductors to place musicians within a division that suits their age and ability.



## Faculty and Staff

RDYO hires professional conductors to lead our ensembles. Several of our faculty have been with the Orchestra for many years, while others are newer members of the RDYO family. Check our Faculty & Staff page on the RDYO website for further information on our conductors.

Conductors are responsible for organizing rehearsals, selecting repertoire, and scheduling outreach concerts. Conductors determine seating assignments, including the position of concertmaster. Orchestra members are expected to show respect for their conductor at all times.

Conductors are assisted by Division Managers, who are parent volunteers. Division managers take attendance, oversee rehearsal set-up, and communicate with parents and musicians.

In addition to our conductors, RDYO has two committed staff members: our Orchestra Manager, Janie Sinn, and our Administrator, Emily Daily. Between them, Janie and Emily are responsible for the day-to-day operations of the Orchestra.

## COMMUNICATIONS

RDYO regularly communicates to its families about program news, events, closures and other important information. **All families, including musicians, parents, and guardians**, are responsible for regularly checking their preferred media for messages and announcements. RDYO communicates through the following means:

- **Email** is the primary method of communication. Please make sure that RDYO has your most up-to-date email. Division managers will send out weekly reminder emails with the latest information. Please adjust your spam filter or firewalls so that you can accept @rdyo.ca emails.
- Our website, **www.rdyo.ca**, is a great source of information regarding schedules and concert information. Check the myRDYO page for details pertaining to your division.
- Occasionally, the RDYO **phone committee** may call you to relay important information such as a rehearsal cancellation.
- Your division may have another method of communication, such as a **Facebook** group or **WhatsApp**.

# REHEARSALS, PRACTICING, AND CONCERTS: RDYO POLICIES

## Rehearsals

Rehearsals have set start and finish times. In order to accommodate ventilation requirements, musicians will only be able to access their rehearsal space 10 minutes prior to the start time. Please arrive 10 minutes early so that rehearsals can begin on time. Arriving late for rehearsal shows disrespect for the conductor and fellow musicians, and will not be tolerated.

The most up-to-date information about our rehearsal schedule is on the website. Very occasionally, RDYO may have to cancel a rehearsal, for example if road conditions are unsafe or provincial health guidelines change. In this case, notification will be placed on the website at 7:30 a.m. on the day of the cancellation.

*What to bring to rehearsal:*

- Bring your instrument, along with any needed accessories such as rosin, extra strings, a mute, reeds, etc.;
- A pencil with a good eraser;
- Your RDYO music folder, with music;
- A music stand;
- **A face covering/mask if you wish to wear one**
- **A bell cover (required for all wind and brass instruments)**

## Rehearsal Locations

RDYO rehearsal locations change in order to accommodate our group sizes and current physical distancing requirements. Our Administrator and Manager will present and working at one of the in-person rehearsal locations either Brighthouse United Church or St Anne's Church.

RDYO continues to seek alternate rehearsal locations, as well as a more permanent home for our music library, percussion instruments, and weekly rehearsals. If you have a suggestion, please bring it to the attention of our Orchestra Manager, [manager@rdyo.ca](mailto:manager@rdyo.ca).

## **Practicing outside of rehearsals**

Players are expected to practice their orchestral pieces during the week, so that they are ready to play at their regular rehearsals. Many players find it beneficial to work on their orchestral pieces with their regular music teacher. Your conductor will tell you how often to practice.

## **Concerts and Recordings**

Concert attendance and participation is an essential part of our players' musical education, and we recognize the benefits of performing and giving back to our community. We will continue to work towards virtual performances for each ensemble until live performances are possible. For all formal recordings, players are required to follow the concert dress code, which is found on our website and in this handbook. Players who are not appropriately dressed may be assigned to the back of their section, or may be denied the opportunity to perform, at the discretion of the conductor.

## **Concert attire**

RDYO has a dress code for formal and informal concerts. The goal of the dress code is to present to the audience a unified and professional appearance. Failure to comply with the concert attire requirements may result in the musician being seated at the back of their section, or not being allowed to perform in the concert. Examples of unacceptable attire include t-shirts, leggings, jeans, athletic/running shoes, coloured or white socks, high heels, and mini-skirts.

## Formal Concerts – Symphony

Bottom options:

- black dress/skirt below the knee
- black dress pants

Top options:

- long-sleeved black dress top
- long-sleeved white shirt and bowtie with black suit/tuxedo jacket

Shoes:

- black dress shoes with no or moderate heel

Notes:

- keep jewelry to a minimum
- socks should black
- NO jeans, visible logos, or casual shoes such as runners or sneakers
- when masks are required, please wear black



## Formal Concerts – All Other Divisions

Bottom options:

- black skirt below the knee
- black dress pants

Top options:

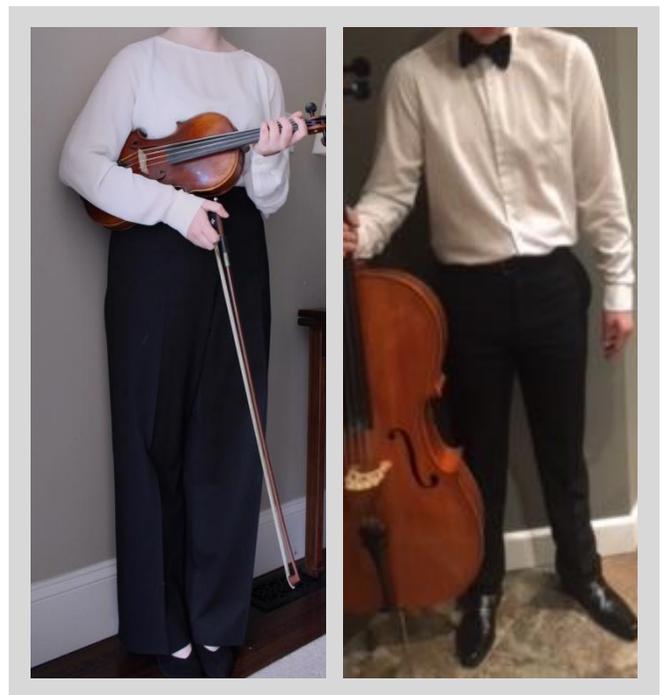
- long-sleeved white dress top
- long-sleeved white shirt with black bow-tie

Shoes:

- black formal shoes with no or moderate heel

Notes:

- keep jewellery to a minimum
- socks should black
- NO jeans, visible logos, or casual shoes such as runners or sneakers
- when masks are required, please wear black



## **All divisions: Attire for informal concerts**

Tops: purple RDYO t-shirt

Bottoms: black pants, black socks, black shoes

## **Understanding the Orchestra hierarchy**

Conductors decide how musicians are seated within an ensemble, and these decisions are final. The “first chair” or principal player in a section is responsible for leading that section. Being selected as a principal player is an honour and a responsibility; the principal must set an excellent standard for practicing, attendance, and attitude.

Each division is overseen by a parent volunteer, known as the Division Manager. The Division Manager takes attendance, noting any late arrivals (there should be none!), and assigns tasks to parents through the year. These tasks will include helping organize a social event for players, supervising online rehearsals, and helping to transport and set up equipment for rehearsals, concerts, and recordings.

## **Attendance (rehearsals and concerts)**

RDYO’s orchestral program is an intensive one. Each rehearsal involves development of technique and advancing in the repertoire. Missing even one week can mean that players fall behind their peers, making it difficult to catch up. Conductors are not able to work with individual players to review missed instruction.

If you participate in other extracurricular activities, we ask that you prioritize RDYO for both rehearsals and concerts. It is impossible for conductors to prepare the ensemble for a concert without the full commitment of all musicians. If you feel that your attendance may be sporadic due to other commitments, then RDYO is likely not a good fit for you.

Attendance is recorded at each rehearsal and concert, with a notation of whether the absence is excused or unexcused. An excused absence means that you have a valid reason for missing a rehearsal or concert, and that you have notified your division manager and/or completed the Weekly Health Checklist and indicated an illness. Examples of an excused absence include:

- Illness;
- School or family trip; or
- School-related event,

An unexcused absence means that either you did not notify your Division Manager, or that your reason for absence was not deemed valid. Examples of invalid reasons include:

- Sports game or practice;
- Too busy/tired; or
- Forgot.

#### *Tardiness policy*

It is vital to the success of each rehearsal and class that students arrive on time and ready to play. Students are expected to arrive 10 minutes before their rehearsal begins.

Two tardies are equivalent to one unexcused absence

## **TUITION AND VOLUNTEERING**

### **Tuition Fees**

Tuition fees are determined by your ensemble division, as well as the number of musicians from your family within RDYO. Tuition fees may be paid using PayPal, cheque, or cash. Options are available for families to pay in installments, and additional information can be found on our website at [www.rdyo.ca/registration](http://www.rdyo.ca/registration).

### **Refunds**

Refunds will be granted until the second weekend in October each season (this coincides with our yearly Music Development Camp), less a \$50 administrative fee. As we commit to rehearsal venues and other expenses with a budget based on our initial registration numbers, we are unable to offer partial refunds

after this date. Any refund requests after this date may be considered by the Board of Directors in special circumstances but will not be automatically granted and are subject to approval.

## Bursaries

Bursary support is often available for musicians in the orchestra through our donors. Please submit a letter to the Board President (via mail or email) outlining your family's situation and needs, and we will respond as soon as possible to address your request. Bursaries are not guaranteed for the following year, and additional applications may be requested. Bursary applications are reviewed by the President and only discussed with the Orchestra Manager and Administrator for the purpose of registration. Your name and information will not be discussed or disclosed with the entire Board.

## Volunteering

RDYO is a registered charitable organization governed by a parent-based volunteer Board of Directors. Volunteers are vital to the operation of RDYO and this is an important component of your membership commitment. **RDYO membership involves a minimum 12-hour volunteer contribution.** Your volunteer hours help the Orchestra operate and ensure that tuition remains affordable.

RDYO Membership has involved a minimum 12-hour volunteer contribution per family, or four hours per term. Every family was required to volunteer for at least one concert.

A postdated volunteer cheque of \$200 is collected at the start of the season and destroyed if all hours are met. In cases where neither parent/guardian is available as a volunteer, there is also an option for the deposit to be cashed in lieu of volunteer hours. Volunteer deposit cheques must be submitted along with tuition by September 30th.

On the following page are some areas in which RDYO needs volunteers in a typical season, as well as tasks that are unique to our current rehearsal situations. Please contact Emily Daily at [admin@rdyo.ca](mailto:admin@rdyo.ca) to be assigned specific duties or to be connected with a volunteer team leader.

## Volunteer Opportunities in RDYO

One Team Leader per committee:

1. One shared doc per committee

- a. Doc will include parents contact information for their respective committees

Accountable to Volunteer Coordinator (Board) and Orchestra Manager for (1-5), RDYO Administrator for (6)

### 1) Camp:

- a) Head Chaperone:

- i) In attendance, to act as a support for OM in case of child / health emergencies
  - ii) Head Chaperone becomes Acting OM
  - iii) Children under their wing will be divided equally among other chaperone groups
  - iv) Coordinate with other chaperones for student transfer

- b) Chaperones:

- i) Will attend Music Development camp as chaperone
  - ii) Will be in charge of a group of students for the weekend
  - iii) Make sure that students are safe
  - iv) Accompany on the bus ride there and back if needed

### 2) Concerts - Backstage (OM & Admin)

- a) Will assist OM & Admin with the flow of backstage during the concert
- b) In charge of moving groups of students on and off stage
- c) During the concert, making sure that students stay where they need to be
- d) Check for concert uniform
- e) Take attendance and make sure that all students are accounted for

### 3) Concerts - FOH ambassadors (OM & Admin)

- a) On the day of: person will be in charge of greeting families, handing out promotional information for RDYO
- b) Assist with whatever fundraiser volunteers need

### 4) Concerts - Photographers:

- a) On the day of: will be in charge of taking photos both backstage and in the audience point of view for our website and social media

Please note that there will be many concerts and we will need help for each one. One concert will count for around 4 hours of volunteering.

### 5) Concerts - Fundraiser (OM & Board)

- a) Raffles, Silent Auction etc
- b) Fundraisers - Seasonal (
  - i) Be in charge of the card making fundraiser

ii) Find new fundraisers that RDYO can participate in

**6) Division Group (Admin - receive weekly updates from Leader)**

- a) Division Manager - JS (4)
- b) Division Manager - IS (2)
- c) Division Manager - SS (2)
- d) Division Manager - SY (2) (\*LEADER)
- e) Division Manager - JW (2)
- f) Division Manager - SW (2)
- a) Division Manager - Chamber (2)

Division managers jobs will be divided into 2 parts this year. Between the 2 managers, please divide the work:

- 1) One division manager will be in charge of sending out weekly reminders to families
- 2) One manager will be there at rehearsals and help take attendance and help set up
- 3) Will help find volunteers for set up and tear down (if necessary), or volunteers for concerts or camp.

\*\*Junior Strings will need 4 Division managers (one head Junior Division managers) 1 to send out emails, 3 to help set up and tear down after rehearsals.

Please note that you can switch roles (send emails or attend rehearsals) mid way through the season. Please let Emily (RDYO Administrator) know if you decide to do so.

## Supporting the Orchestra

Every family is asked to promote the Orchestra, and in particular, our concerts within their community.

Examples:

- Place a concert poster on the bulletin board of your church or favourite coffee shop;
- Like and share RDYO posts about concerts on Facebook and Instagram;
- Retweet RDYO tweets;
- Chat about RDYO to any friends with young children who might be interested in music.

Our social media handles:

- Twitter: @RDYOOrchestra
- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/deltayouthorchestra/>
- Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/rdyorchestra/>

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The RDYO is operated by the BC Youth Music Society, which is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors. Board Members perform much of the essential operational work that keeps RDYO going. Board meetings are held once a month on Saturday mornings.

The primary responsibilities of the Board are to oversee operations and to create policy. The Board is responsible to the parent community; all RDYO staff report to the Board. Board members are asked to contribute to the area that best suits their interests and abilities, to the extent that they are able. The following areas are examples of Board member initiatives:

- Hiring: recruiting conductors and admin staff
- Facilities: researching new rehearsal facilities, liaising with landlords
- Fundraising: including donor relations and grant writing
- Finance: overseeing the budget and bookkeeping operations
- Policy: developing and revising policy
- Scholarships & awards: overseeing the adjudication process
- Concerto competition: overseeing the adjudication process
- Camp: ensuring that the annual Orchestra camp operates smoothly
- Five-year plan: ensuring that the Orchestra continues to thrive

## DIVISION MANAGERS

Division Managers are an important conduit between the families, conductors, board, and administration. Their duties are shared amongst many parents this year, and may include:

- Attendance
- Setup and cleanup of rehearsal spaces
- Concerts
- Communications (weekly email reminders)
- Online rehearsal supervision
- Disinfecting practices
- In-person rehearsal supervision
- Social events

## ANNUAL EVENTS

RDYO schedules educational opportunities and events for our young musicians throughout the year. Many of these events have been postponed this year due to COVID-19, and we look forward to when we can safely offer them once again. Please consult the website for specific dates and further details.

### **Music Camp**

Each Thanksgiving Weekend, RDYO organizes a two-day residential camp for all winds/brass/percussion musicians and strings musicians from Intermediate Strings and above. Music camp is an important opportunity for young musicians to bond with each other and with their conductors, as well as engaging in intensive rehearsals and sectional coaching. Time is set aside for socializing and group games. Many of our graduates look back on music camp as their fondest RDYO memory.

The cost of attending camp is included in your tuition fees, and attendance is strongly encouraged. Even if your child has never been away from home before, we believe they will find the camp fun and engaging. RDYO charts a bus to take musicians and their instruments to and from camp; taking the bus is optional and will cost an additional fee.

### ***A note on cell phone use at camp***

Because we want our musicians to connect with each other, we encourage them to leave their cell phones at home. If you strongly feel that your child needs a phone, please be aware of our policies: musicians are only allowed to use their phones during quiet times and breaks, or while in their cabin. Whenever a conductor is in the room, whether for meals, rehearsals, a presentation, or performance, phones must be put away.

### **Rotary Concert**

Each November, RDYO performs at a charity concert for the Rotary Club. The concert benefits many Rotary charities, and it also benefits RDYO. Each family is required to purchase two tickets to this concert, which is always a splendid evening of entertainment. All funds RDYO receives from ticket sales go into our Scholarship and Bursary Fund. In addition, Rotary donates a significant sum of money each year to our Scholarship and Bursary Fund, meaning that all RDYO families benefit from our relationship with Rotary. The Rotary Concert is the only concert for which parents are required to purchase tickets. If you do not wish to attend the concert, please give your tickets to a friend.

## **Christmas outreach concerts**

RDYO participates in many outreach concerts, particularly at Christmas. Our younger divisions will play informally at venues such as Brighthouse Library, while the older divisions often play at Aberdeen Centre. Dates and times will be posted on the website.

## **Winter Workshop**

Each year during the winter term, RDYO hosts a one-day workshop on a Saturday. The day is jam-packed with rehearsals, master classes, and sectional coaching. We also try to arrange for a fun musical activity, such as a drumming workshop. Details on the day and time will be posted as soon as they are confirmed.

## **Competitions**

RDYO sponsors an orchestra-wide Concerto Competition and a Scholarship Competition each year. For the Concerto Competition, an independent adjudicator will judge the performance of one movement of a concerto. For the Scholarship Competition, the adjudication process considers not only musicianship, but also attendance, self-discipline, attitude, and participation. RDYO considers these attributes to be essential to success in the Orchestra, and in life. Players with unexcused absences (as outlined in Attendance, above) will not be considered for the Scholarship Competition or the Concerto Competition, at the discretion of their Division Manager or Conductor.

The Concerto Competition will take place in November. The Scholarship Competition will take place in April.

## **Open house days**

Several times during the year, RDYO will hold open house days, during which anyone interested in the orchestra may view or participate in a rehearsal. These days will be announced ahead of time; feel free to extend an invitation to anyone you know with a musical child.

## **Parent viewing days**

Each conductor will hold at least one parent viewing day during the year. This is a great opportunity for parents to learn more about how an orchestra rehearses, as well as to meet other parents in the division.

## **Year-end party**

RDYO's Board of Directors hosts a year-end party for all our young musicians. Typically, the event will take place in early June. More details will be announced closer to the date.

## RYDO CODE OF CONDUCT

Our Code of Conduct is a representation of our core values and an outline of expected behaviour and attitudes for all members of our Orchestra family.

- **Demonstrate respect for yourself and others.** Keep hands, feet, and objects to yourself and never intentionally harm another musician. If you see someone being bullied, intervene by telling them to stop or immediately report it to an adult in charge.
- **Demonstrate courtesy to others.** Use appropriate language and behavior at all times while maintaining friendly and courteous behavior.
- **Behave in a positive and responsible manner.** Follow the conductor's instructions and expectations at all times.
- **Attend regularly with requested permission for absences.** Attendance and participation are an essential part of the educational process. Regular attendance is necessary for student success. All students are encouraged to be present and prompt. Rehearsal attendance is the responsibility of both parents and students. Parents will be contacted if a pattern of late arrivals is noted.
- **Be prepared for rehearsals and concerts.** Be in the assigned place with appropriate materials, ready to work at the time that rehearsal begins.
- **Acknowledge your contribution to the success of the Orchestra.** Take your part in the Orchestra seriously. Do not become a distraction for others. Give every other musician the opportunity to maximize their potential. Encourage your fellow students. Never tear them down.
- **Cooperate with others.** This includes peers, conductors, administrators, volunteers, parents and visitors. Be polite and respectful.
- **Dress appropriately.** See dress code in the Orchestra Family Handbook for more details.
- **Respect others' property,** especially other musicians' instruments.