

# Lassiter High School Orchestra Student/Parent Handbook



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# Lassiter High School Orchestra Student/Parent Handbook

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## Welcome to the Lassiter Orchestra Program!

This handbook has been compiled for the parents and students of the orchestra program at Lassiter High School. It is designed to acquaint the orchestra members and parents with the requirements, expectations, and procedures in orchestra class.

The Lassiter Orchestra program is part of a tradition of excellence in instrumental music instruction and performance within the Cobb County Schools. I am very honored to be the director of this fine program and look forward to working with all of you this year!

To avoid conflicts with the stated policies, all orchestra members and parents are urged to read this handbook so that the student and parent expectations are understood.

When the handbook has been read entirely, please complete the online information found in the Orchestra Beginning Of the Year assignment (OBOY) and return the orchestra contract. This will indicate a basic understanding of the material presented in this handbook.

**To the Students:** Welcome to the Lassiter Orchestra family! I am very proud to be your director, and I hope you are ready for a successful year. I know that you will enjoy the experience of being involved in a group that includes students who have outstanding citizenship, a strong, committed community, and strive for musical excellence. There is a lot of hard work that will be required of you during this year, and by trying your best and keeping a positive attitude you will reap all the rewards that will come because of your effort.

My responsibility to each of you is to accept you for what you are NOW, not what you will be or what you have been, and to demonstrate to the best of my ability that music is a way of expression, a way of working together, a way of sharing and understanding ourselves and each other better. Let's have some fun!!

**To the Parents:** As the director, I am here not only to help the student, but also to work with each of you in achieving a quality education in music for your child. If it were not for your support, encouragement, and approval, the quality of your child's education would suffer. For more information on your role in your child's education, see the section of this handbook entitled *Parent Involvement*.

Communication is key in any partnership and extremely important when dealing with the amount of information that your son/daughter receives at school. I will do my best to help keep the website current and send periodic email newsletters via CTLS Parent that will help keep you up to date with important news and upcoming events. Please be sure to subscribe to our mailing list with your e-mail address so that you can receive the information.

A successful music program is the result of a unified partnership between parents, students, and the director. When you have read the handbook completely, please complete the [LHSO Handbook Acceptance Form](#).

Also, please plan to attend the Parent Meeting/Open House scheduled for *Thursday, August 8 at 7:30 pm in the Concert Hall* and students should plan our *Fall Camp on Saturday, August 10 from 9 AM to 4 PM. Details coming soon!*

If I can be of any assistance, or if you have any questions, suggestions, or concerns, please feel free to contact me.

Musically,

Dr. Laux

## Getting to know your director...



I am extremely proud to be the Director of Orchestras at Lassiter High School! We have a fantastic program with the best students, parents, administration, community, and facilities. I'm very proud of our musical accomplishments and love being a part of the orchestra family. I'm excited for our continued growth this year.

In addition to my school duties, I also serve as Essential Elements clinician, consultant, and contributor for the Hal Leonard, the world's largest music publisher. I grew up in Mentor, Ohio, just east of Cleveland. I hold degrees in music education from Ohio University, the University of Nevada – Las Vegas, and a Ph.D. from The Ohio State University.

It's hard to believe, but this year marks my 29th year in music education. Throughout my career I have been afforded the opportunity to work with diverse student populations from elementary school through the collegiate level

In 2012 I moved to Georgia to serve as the very first as Assistant Professor of String Music Education at Kennesaw State University. At KSU I was responsible for training new string teachers. I taught courses in string techniques, pedagogy, and music education technology integration, supervised student teachers, conducted the KSU Philharmonic and coordinated string outreach activities including serving as founding director of the KSU String Project. Under my leadership, Kennesaw State University became the largest string education program in Georgia and the KSU String Project grew to serve over 100 elementary school students. From 2016-2022 I taught at Alpharetta High School where I conducted five levels of orchestra, including the nationally recognized Alpharetta HS Symphony Orchestra that was invited to perform at the Midwest Clinic in Chicago in 2018. Prior to locating to Georgia, I directed award-winning school orchestra programs in Nevada, Florida, and Ohio.

I am honored to be endorsed as an artist-educator by D'Addario Orchestral Strings and Eastman Stringed Instruments. I have presented nearly 200 educational sessions for organizations such as the Midwest Clinic, American String Teachers Association, Technology Institute for Music Education, Association for Technology in Music Instruction, and at music conferences spanning 28 states. I regularly present professional development in-services for school districts across the country and presented internationally in Canada and Ecuador. I enjoy performing (on violin and viola!) and have played with the Las Vegas Philharmonic, the Nevada Chamber Symphony, the Columbus String Quartet, and was featured in a collaborative solo-performance with several members of the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra.

I really enjoy giving back to the string and orchestra community through my "The Orchestra Teacher" website, podcast, and YouTube channel that can be accessed at [www.orchestrateteacher.net](http://www.orchestrateteacher.net). In my spare time, I enjoy running, cycling, camping, cooking, coaching baseball, watching sports, and boating. Most of all, I enjoy spending time with my wife, Stacy, and my two sons, Charlie (15), and Andy (13).

Again, I'm so excited for this school year and the opportunity to work with each of you all at Lassiter!

**Go Trojans!**

## I. COURSE SCOPES AND GOALS

**A. MEMBERSHIP IN THE ORCHESTRA PROGRAM:** The orchestra program is open to all students demonstrating the desire, ability, and proper attitude to be a member of the group. Each student will have an equal and fair opportunity for participation in the orchestra program. Students will be placed in an orchestral ensemble at the discretion of the director based upon the student's achievement from the previous year, an audition, and/or recommendations of previous instructors.

**B. COURSE DESCRIPTION:** The Lassiter 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 with possible after school rehearsals and approximately 4-6 major performance per year. Some orchestras may have additional performances.

### C. GOALS OF THE LASSITER ORCHESTRA PROGRAM

1. To participate in the performance of music and learn the technical skills of playing an instrument, which will result in a positive learning experience.
2. To attain a mastery of the instrument and feel the satisfaction of achieving something worthwhile through concentrated effort, in both small and large groups.
3. To awaken a sense of creativeness and provide an avenue for self-expression.
4. To develop performance skills necessary for independence as a string player.
5. To elevate students to achieve and surpass the National Music Standards and State Benchmarks set forth by the National Association for Music Education, the American String Teachers Association, and the State of Georgia.
6. To identify and authentically perform various musical styles which developed throughout history.
7. To develop attitudes enabling students to continue participating in musical experiences throughout their life.

### D. ORCHESTRAL ENSEMBLES

**Concert Orchestra**, 2nd period, is an intermediate level orchestra that continues instruction after middle school. The content of this course includes instruction in performance techniques with emphasis placed on technical and musical skills through the study of rudimentary exercises and mainly grade 2-3 string orchestra repertoire. Individual practice outside of class time is necessary for successful mastery of performance standards. [CCSD Course Name: HS Beginning Orchestra.] *Prerequisite: previous orchestra experience in middle school and/or teacher recommendation.*

**Philharmonia Orchestra**, 3rd period, is an upper intermediate level orchestra. The content of this course includes instruction in performance techniques with emphasis placed on technical and musical skills through the study of rudimentary exercises and mainly grade 3-4 string orchestra repertoire. Individual practice outside of class time is necessary for successful mastery of performance standards. [CCSD Course Name: HS Intermediate Orchestra.] *Prerequisite: Audition and/or orchestra experience in middle school or teacher recommendation.*

**Sinfonia Orchestra**, 4th period, is an advanced-level orchestra. This course includes advanced instruction in performance techniques with emphasis placed on technical and musical skills through the study of mainly grade 4-5 string orchestra repertoire. Individual practice outside of class time is necessary for successful mastery of performance standards. [CCSD Course Name: HS Advanced Orchestra.] *Prerequisite: Audition*

**Chamber Orchestra**, 5th period, is comprised of students at the highest skill level and serves as the elite string ensemble at LHS. Students in this course will demonstrate a mastery level of proficiency on violin, viola, cello, bass. Students should be prepared to complete rigorous performance assessments and spend time outside of class for performances. Individual practice outside of class time is necessary for successful mastery of performance standards. [CCSD Course Name: HS Mastery Orchestra] *Prerequisite: Audition*

**Note:** Students must demonstrate that they can uphold their standing in their respective orchestra class both musically and behaviorally. If the student is not successful, the student may be reassigned to a different orchestra class at the director's discretion.

## II. GRADING

### A. GENERAL EXPECTATIONS:

- Come to class prepared all materials.
- Cooperate in rehearsal with appropriate effort, attitude, and conduct.
- Practice your instrument regularly to make a personal improvement every week.
- Complete all required playing exams and written work
- Attend scheduled performances prepared and dressed in the appropriate uniform
- Keep phones and other technology silenced and in your backpack during rehearsals
- Keep a positive attitude, be willing to learn, and have fun!!!



**B. GRADES:** A student's semester grade will be determined by a combination of points that they have earned during the 18-week semester. Letter grades will be assigned according to Cobb County's approved grading scale, which is as follows: A—100-90, B—89-80, C—79-70, F—69-0. Honors points are added by the county at the end of each semester. Additional information can be found in the LHS Handbook for Students and Parents.

**C. WEIGHTS:** Points will be given in the following areas:

#### 1. Performances/Live and Recorded Submissions – 50%

- Performance evaluations are designed to individually assess improvement of the skills and techniques that are taught in class and in preparation for performances.
- Evaluations may consist of any combination of announced and unannounced playing tests given in-class (live) or recorded via audio or video (in-class or at home).
- Shorter performance evaluations or playing checks that are designed to individually assess improvement of the skills and techniques that are taught in class and in preparation for performances.
- Students may also be asked to prepare and perform a solo and form small ensembles each semester as part of this grade.
- Concerts are a major part of this grade and may carry a 2X grade calculation multiplier.
- Other large performance-based assessments may fall into this category.

#### 2. Rehearsal Skills & Daily Preparation – 15%

- Arriving to class and rehearsals on time; being respectful to the teacher, fellow classmates, or any guest; coming to class prepared with all materials; demonstrating proper rehearsal behavior & positive attitude.
- In addition, students may receive a grade based on the director's assessment of student progress over a period of time.

#### 3. Written and Electronic Assignments – 25%

- Assigned written class work, written homework assignments, written quiz, reflection, online post, practice vlog or chart, or music folder checks. Any online form, paper form, or permission slip that must be completed, signed and returned.

#### 4. Midterm Exam, Audition, or Project – 5%

- The midterm may be in the form of a written exam, reflection, audition, or performance assessment.

#### 5. Final Exam – 10%

- The Final Exam may be in the form of a written exam, audition, and/or performance assessment.

#### D. LATE WORK POLICY:

Submitted work will be accepted late for a reduced grade. Any late assignment can earn a maximum grade of 89%. *Work will only be accepted late within each of the 6-week grading periods.* Deadlines will be announced ahead of time and will be strictly enforced. Once the next 6-week grading period begins and the late work deadline has passed, work from the preceding grading period will not be accepted and missing assignments will turn to permanent zero grades for that semester.

**E. HOME PRACTICE:** Practice is an integral part of orchestra class and learning to play any instrument. Every student enrolled in the Lassiter Orchestra program is expected to regularly practice all lessons, skills, techniques, concepts, and concert music taught in class. Students should plan on devote time each day for home practice. The required amount of practice time is determined by your level of mastery of the musical material. Every student is different, therefore there is no set “number of minutes” requirement. Musical success any performing ensemble achieves is directly related to the quality practice time the individual member brings to that ensemble.

**F. PERFORMANCES AND CAMP PARTICIPATION:** There are typically 2 to 4 concerts per semester and one camp 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 Lassiter 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 points). 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, Pre-LGPE Concert, and Spring Concert. PARENTS: PLEASE MAKE NOTE OF THIS.
- **Uniform Infraction** (-10 points) – any missing/incorrect pieces or the uniform
- **Out of Uniform.** This infraction will result in the student being removed from the ensemble and receiving a grade of zero.
- **Tardy to ‘Call Time’** (-20 points). It is standard practice to arrive 15 minutes prior to each performance or rehearsal ‘call time’.
- **Missing Equipment/Music** (-10 to -15 points). Any missing instrument accessory, shoulder rest, sheet music, etc.
- **Behavior Issues** will be addressed by the director and deduction/disciplinary action applied accordingly

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

**G. RECORDED SUBMISSIONS:** Students will submit recorded assignments through an online source (TBD). These assignments include basic musical fundamentals such as scales, arpeggios, etudes, and excerpts. For students

without a phone or are having technical issues. 'Lack of a device' or 'technical difficulties' is not grounds for a deadline extension, so please do not wait until the last minute to submit your recordings.

**H. 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, instrument position, bow hold, and left-hand shape. *Important: 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. *Exceptions will be made for those without a lunch period.* Bottled water is permissible.

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

- Attendance; on time to class and in seat 2 minutes after bell ready for tuning
- Helping with set-up if needed
- Remaining in seat while instruction is going on
- Keeping attentive without talking, cell phone (leave in backpack), and/or playing/noise disturbance
- Participation and following directions with a good attitude and effort
- Having materials: Instrument/bow in good playing condition, music, pencil, rosin, mute, extra strings, and notebook
- Proper fingernail length (THIS IS A MUST!)

**I. WRITTEN AND ELECTRONIC ASSIGNMENTS:** Class assignments (i.e., critiques, music theory, concert reflections, music terms, history, etc.) are primarily assigned electronically through CTLS or other methods. Please ask a director if you need assistance.

**J. MIDTERM PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT:** The Midterm Performance Assessment occurs each semester. This is a skill-based assessment on scales, arpeggios, and etudes and/or musical excerpts. This assessment will give us ample data on the progress of each student and is a major grade each semester. The assessment may be given after school due to the extensive logistics required to hold 'live' auditions with multiple professional string educators. Please notify directors immediately if you have a conflict with your assessment time. All conflicts are resolvable with advance notice.

**K. FINAL EXAM:** All students will be graded at the end of each semester either aurally, written, or by both.

### III. CLASSROOM CONDUCT & OPERATING PROCEDURES

**A. CLASS BEHAVIOR:** Students will find that some of the policies in the orchestra handbook are similar to those in the school handbook.

1. Obey all school policies. School rules and policies are in effect at any time a student is involved in an activity sponsored by or in the name of the Fulton County Schools.
2. Treat others and their property with **respect**.
3. No talking, playing, or plucking while the director, assistant director, or student leader is giving directions or working with students.
4. Be in your seat, warming up, and prepared to play within three minutes after the bell rings.
5. Always remain in your seat. Please raise your hand and wait until called on before talking. Hall passes will be issued sparingly. If possible, use the restroom prior to the class bell.



6. Bring your materials (instrument, book, music, pencil, etc.) to class every day. **Cellular phones and other personal electronic devices must remain silenced and in your bag or on the charger in the back of the room during class.**
7. Do not touch equipment or instruments that do not belong to you.
8. Put away your music and instrument after each rehearsal.
9. Do not bring food, gum, or drinks (except water) in the orchestra room. *Exceptions will be made only for those without a lunch period.*
10. No running or horseplay in the orchestra room, instrument room or hallways.

**B. DAILY CLASS PROCEDURE:** With few exceptions, the daily procedure will be as follows:

**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 to 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 your backpack and personal belongings in the designated 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. While tuning, please be silent. Noise during tuning interferes with the tuning process.
5. Practice passages taught in class that day before the next rehearsal. If you reinforce what you just learned, you'll be surprised how quickly you master the skills. Mark passages that need practice during rehearsal. When you neglect practice, you slow down the progress of the class and yourself.
6. Be attentive during class and follow directions the first time they are given. This saves time and will make progress fast and effective!
7. 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 appropriate space on the racks.
8. 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 directors can help you figure out a way to get your instrument.
9. NEVER touch an instrument that does not belong to you (another student's or a Lassiter instrument). Ask a Dr. Laux if you have an issue with your instrument.
10. Director dismisses the class (not the bell).

**C. CLASSROOM DISCIPLINE:** If you are unable to comply with the classroom rules, you will be dealt with accordingly.

- 1st infraction: Verbal Warning and a teacher / student discussion after class
- 2nd infraction: Time out/mini conferences and reduction of rehearsal skills grade
- 3rd infraction: Detention and a phone call to parent
- 4th infraction: Discipline referral

\* **Note:** If a student severely disrupts class to the extent that the educational process is disrupted (e.g. fight, etc.), they will be sent to the office IMMEDIATELY and may automatically receive a discipline referral.

#### **D. CLASSROOM REWARDS:**

- Praise (may include a high-five!)
- Positive notes/phone calls to parents
- Free time / social time
- Fun stuff!

**E. ATTENDANCE:** Orchestra members are required to attend all scheduled classroom rehearsals and performances to maintain an exceptional performance standard. As a co-curricular course, rehearsals and performances are part of the educational process. Absences and tardiness affect not only the individual who is absent but also the entire ensemble. The complete list of LHSO events is published on our website and on CTLs at the beginning of the year.

All after school rehearsals and 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 a director with any questions.

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

1. **CONCERT ATTENDANCE POLICY:** Performances are mandatory and are classified as a major part of a student's grade. **Any** absence, except for an emergency, not brought to the director's attention for approval **prior** to the performance will be considered *unexcused*.
2. **EXCUSED ABSENCE:** Requests for consideration to be excused from performance must be turned in to the director, in writing from the parent or guardian, at least 14 days in advance of the scheduled performance date.

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 directors will assign the parameters and topics.

3. **EXCUSED ABSENCE MAKE-UP GRADE:** 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. PLEASE COMMUNICATE DIRECTLY WITH DR. LAUX IF THERE ARE INDIVIDUAL OR UNUSUAL CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH MAY BE A PROBLEM

4. **UNEXCUSED ABSENCE:** An unexcused absence from class or an extra rehearsal will count as zero for that day and the student may receive a lower participation grade. Unexcused absences may also result in a lower performance grade, being placed further back in the section, or not being allowed to perform a given concert. 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.

Unexcused absences from concerts include, but are not limited to, homework, appointments, lack of transportation, club meetings, baby-sitting, birthday celebrations, oversleeping, shopping, sports

practices or games, meetings, work, and vacation. These will not be accepted as valid excuses for missing a concert. Absences are excused only in cases of emergency. In the case of illness, parents or students should notify the director as early as possible. If an unanticipated absence occurs, a written request for excuse from a parent or guardian is due within two days of the absence

5. **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.

**F. TARDY POLICY:** Students must be on time for all assigned orchestra functions. Learning to be early will establish a lifelong habit that is critical to an individual's and this organization's success. Being on time is defined as follows: At the requested time, the student is in his or her assigned seat with the instrument, bow, music and a pencil. For all performances a call time will be assigned. Any student who is not present, or in place, by the assigned call time will be counted as tardy. This tardy will result in a lowered grade for that performance. Habitual tardiness will be handled in accordance with the policies listed in the Lassiter HS student handbook.

**G. CONFLICTS WITH ORCHESTRA:** Rehearsal and performance calendars are normally given out well in advance. While not always 100% preventable, every effort will be made to eliminate conflicts with other major school activities. It is the policy of the orchestra to assist students when conflicts occur within the scope of orchestra policy. Conflicts should be brought to the director's attention IN WRITING as soon as the student is aware of a discrepancy. A minimum of two weeks' notice should be given, but earlier is better. Students should not expect to automatically be excused because of conflicts.

Students are reminded that orchestra is a demanding activity and does require a commitment of time inside *and* outside of the school day. All orchestra concerts will take top priority over most school sport and other extra-curricular activities because orchestra is a *co-curricular, academic* class. Please do not hesitate to contact Dr. Laux with questions.

**H. SEATING ASSIGNMENTS:** The goal of this orchestra is to work together to achieve musical goals. While the major determining process for seating will be playing tests and student achievement, the director reserves the right to change seating assignments at any time deemed appropriate within the course of the year. To assign seating, the director may choose from several different processes. Students begin their "audition" the first day of class by being prepared for class, showing outstanding class participation, and showing competency on their instrument. Section leaders need to exemplify positive leadership behavior and may be responsible for helping the director with marking student music and keeping their section in line both musically and behaviorally. \*\* Please remember that it is not that important where one sits. It is more important to be of an attitude and mindset of always giving one's best, funneling all effort toward the betterment of the ensemble.

**I. AUDIENCE ETIQUETTE:** Being a courteous audience member is as important as being a good performer. Proper audience etiquette shows respect for the performers and their work. Talking, whispering, or moving around is not acceptable during a concert. It is very distracting for the performers on stage and is also distracting to other audience members who are trying to enjoy the concert. If parents or other guests come to a concert late, please enter between musical selections so that you do not interrupt the performance. Audience etiquette will be reviewed prior to concerts.

**J. MAKE-UP ASSIGNMENTS:** In the event a student is excused from a performance, class or rehearsal, a make-up assignment will be given. The make-up assignment will require the students to perform for the director, individually, all the music from the missed performance plus additional material, which may include written work as deemed appropriate by the director.

**K. COMMUNITY PERFORMANCES:** As a means of making a positive contribution to the local community and Cobb County, the orchestra is called upon to give community performances from time to time. These performances could be during the school day, after school, evenings or weekends. As these performances are essential to maintaining a positive relationship with these supportive communities, all orchestra students are required to take an active part in community performances. The director will make assignments for musicians for extra performances as may be necessary. Every effort will be made to give at least two weeks' notice for extra performances.

**L. STUDENT LEADERS:** The student leaders may be asked to assist with some of the everyday operations of the orchestra. Any student assigned to a leadership role must remember that the position comes with a great deal of responsibility.

The **concertmaster** is the first chair in the first violin section. This person will be appointed after several playing exams are completed. Concertmasters are the student leaders of the orchestra. They may be held responsible for daily tuning and warm-up procedure and to help keep all the rehearsals progressing by communicating with the members of the 1st violins and all of the other section leaders as well.

**Section leaders** are the people who lead the other individual string sections, usually the first chair of each section. If the section leader is not holding up the responsibility, the instructor has the right to reassign this position to another orchestra member. A good-strong section leader always displays a positive attitude. Communication between all section leaders, concertmaster and director is vital.

**M. ORCHESTRA LEADERSHIP DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:** Leadership goes above and beyond the call of duty. Responsibilities and duties of leadership begin with being leaders not only during rehearsals and performances, but 24/7. During rehearsal time, leadership is expected to be participating in the rehearsal. Duties that require extra time must be executed outside of rehearsal time except when the duty is directly related to the rehearsal itself.

**President(s):** The General Manager of the orchestra presides over all business meetings of the orchestra, leads the orchestra in fundraising events, oversees duties and responsibilities of all other orchestra officers, and represents orchestra membership at officer meetings. The managers must be a senior or junior.

**Librarians:** The Librarians are responsible for the issue, collection and filing of all music, accomplishing library work, and keeping the library facilities neat and orderly.

**Media Team:** Members of the media team are responsible taking digital pictures of rehearsals, trips and other events pertaining to the orchestra. They will print some pictures for posters and give pictures to the webmaster for posting on the LHS Orchestra website and social media accounts. They will also be responsible for producing and finding help to produce a slide show or video for the Awards Banquet at the end of the year.

**Inventory Specialists:** The Inventory Specialists will assist with the storage, issue and collection of all school owned instruments and checking out instruments. In addition, they assist with maintaining instruments and equipment. The operations officer works with parent volunteers to assist with uniforms.

**Logistics Team:** The logistics team is responsible for the daily set-up of the orchestra room and movement of equipment to and from rehearsals and performances outside the rehearsal room. The logistics officers also recruit extra help as needed from within each orchestra.

**Student Services Team:** The student services team members are responsible for setting up community service projects both on and off campus as well as projects that do not include performance with a musical instrument. They are responsible for establishing students into individual, small group performance ensembles for campus service and community service events. Finally, they are responsible for finding student volunteers to participate in on and off campus volunteer projects that do not require a performance ensemble.

**N. ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITY:** All students wishing to participate in extra-curricular (off campus) events must have, and maintain, at least a 2.0 GPA with no failing grades in any class. Any student failing to remain eligible shall be suspended from all extra-curricular orchestral activities until their academic status has been regained. However, this does not excuse the student from attending orchestral functions, such as rehearsals and on-campus concerts. Academics always come first!

## IV. MATERIALS

It is necessary that you have the items below by the second week of school. Most music stores in the area will have these items in stock but it's best to call to confirm before you make the trip. Having these materials in class is necessary to participate. Please let a director know if you have questions or concerns about class materials.

### A. REQUIRED MATERIALS:

1. **All students** need an instrument and bow in good playing condition with the following accessories: Rosin, Polishing/cleaning cloth, Music stand, Case tag labeled with student's name, address, phone number, and email address.
2. **Violin and viola students** must use a rigid (i.e. Everest, Kun, etc.) shoulder rest. The foam/sponge type of rests should be avoided.
3. **Cello and bass students** must use a rockstop, especially when playing on wood or tile surfaces. Rockstops help prevent floor damage at school and at home.
4. **Music Folder** (provided) and **Pencil** for marking music. Please do not use a pen.
5. **Fresh, High-Quality Strings** – It is recommended that students (especially violin/viola) plan for the worst by keeping an extra set of quality strings on-hand. Students must change their strings at least once per school year. The “change it when it breaks” method for changing strings is not acceptable since strings lose their pitch and vitality long before they break. Using old or low-quality strings will make instruments sound thin, weak, and difficult to tune.
6. **Metronome/Chromatic tuner (App)** -- A metronome is an electronic device that helps a student keep a steady beat. A chromatic tuner can aid students as they learn to tune on their own. Most phones support free apps that suite this purpose. Tonal Energy Tuner is fantastic and includes a metronome.

**B. SCHOOL INSTRUMENT USE:** Orchestra students become eligible to use school-owned cellos and basses in class, pending availability, by submitting an Instrument Agreement Form. Students are expected to maintain good condition of these instruments and will accept responsibility for any damages other than normal use. The director will determine all fines based upon repair appraisals. Cello and bass students must have an instrument that stays at home for home practice. All cello and bass students must bring their personal instruments from home for all concerts and combined rehearsals.

**C. INSTRUMENT STORAGE:** All students will be able to store their personal instruments in the orchestra room when not in use. Please do not store food, shoes, gym clothes or other items not related to orchestra in the storage rooms. **Note:** *LHS and Cobb County Schools do not provide insurance to cover lost or stolen property. Please check with your homeowner's insurance company to inquire about student instrument insurance.*

**D. INSTRUMENT CARE:** Stringed instruments and bows are very delicate. Always be careful when handling your personal instrument or any other instrument.

- It is required that all instruments are kept in good playing condition.
- When not in use, always place the instrument and bow securely in the case. Even if the instrument is stored securely, damage may occur if the case is not latched or jarred.
- Always loosen the bow before returning it to the case. Never over-tighten the bow.
- Using a lint-free cloth, always wipe the instrument clean of dust and rosin build-up. Never touch the bow hair. Oils from the skin will ruin the horsehair.
- Be careful not to bump the pegs or bridge of the instrument.
- Do your best to wash your hands before you play your instrument.
- Keep instruments away from extreme heat, cold and humidity. Never leave your instrument in a car because heat can damage the instrument very quickly.
- Do not allow others to play your personal instrument.
- Only allow qualified string instrument technicians (a luthier) to attempt repairs.
- Make sure that your instrument case is labeled with your name and phone number.

**E. REPAIRS:** If your instrument needs repair, 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 daily class rehearsals.

**F. MUSIC LIBRARY:** The school's music library consists of arrangements, transcriptions, and original works. Here are some guidelines concerning the music library:

- Only the official librarians are allowed to pull music from the orchestra library. Others are allowed only with the director's permission.
- Students will be assigned a folder for the use of storing music. The student will be responsible for returning all class orchestra music and folders that have been assigned. Failure to do so may result in a replacement charge to the student.

**G. UNIFORM & DRESS CODE:** The orchestra has adopted standardized uniforms. It is a matter of group pride, which is pertinent and integral towards successful orchestral performances, for musicians to present themselves in a manner of professionalism, unity, and dignity. **There are 2 uniforms used during the year:** 'Concert Black for concerts and the 'Lassiter Orchestra t-shirt' for a more casual setting such as performances at school, field trips, and informal concerts.

Students who are not in the required uniform or out of dress code will forfeit the privilege of performing. Out of the high sense of respect for the music and the audience, the orchestra dress code for performances will include the following:

#### **Formal Uniform**

**OPTION 1:** Black long sleeve dress shirt, black dress slacks, black tie, black socks, and black dress shoes. *The uniform must be ordered [from Tuxedo Wholesaler](#) so that there is uniformity in style, fabric, and color.*

**OPTION 2:** Black "Ava EZ fit short-sleeve" gown for performances [from Tuxedo Wholesaler](#). This uniform consists of the black gown, black or tan hosiery, and black closed-toe pumps or flats (sandals and clogs are not permitted). Each student is sized at the beginning of their freshman year and given information for

ordering their uniform. *The black gown worn by former Mabry or Simpson Middle School students is acceptable.* Used gowns may be available (quantities & sizes are limited) for a discounted price.

#### **Notes For All Students:**

*Acceptable items:* Stud earrings, fine or thin necklace with a single pendant, a single, thin, precious metal bracelet.

*Unacceptable items:* Watches, large dangling or hoop earrings of any size, large flashy jewelry, plastic tube bracelets, flip-flops, two-toned shoes, white socks, sneakers (including black sneakers), or boots.

#### **Casual Uniform**

The casual uniform is the Lassiter High School Orchestra t-shirt and usually blue jeans. 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.

*Important Note:* When your student's formal uniform arrives from Tuxedo Wholesaler, the gown or trousers will require hemming. Please plan accordingly.

## **V. CITIZENSHIP**

**A. THE IMPORTANCE OF A POSITIVE ATTITUDE:** The single factor that will determine the success of any individual or organization is attitude. It takes intense dedication to reach goals. Students should learn to discipline themselves to daily practice. These practice sessions should include a warm-up regimen, as well as solos and the whittling of their parts. Ideally, the "right attitude" accompanies sincerity, concentration, and dedication as the foundation. Such an attitude makes an artistic performance inevitable. It is a privilege to belong to an orchestra. Make the most of it in every rehearsal and performance.

**B. THE IMPORTANCE OF DISCIPLINE:** Due to the nature of the organization, discipline within the orchestra must be firm. Orchestra students and their parents must be willing to accept the ideals, principles, and rules of the organization. Orchestra members are constantly on display. Therefore, each member must always be aware of the importance of good behavior. Any misconduct casts a negative light on the orchestra, as well as Lassiter High School and the Cobb

**C. THE IMPORTANCE OF PRIDE:** I would like us to take pride in everything we do, not just in orchestra, but also in all our classes and actions. If you are going to do something, do it with PRIDE!

**D. THE IMPORTANCE OF COURTESY:** Courtesy to teachers, school employees, parents, chaperones, other students, and guests is very important. Each of us should strive to be considerate of all others. Discourtesy and rudeness will result in disciplinary action as set forth in the Lassiter HS Student Handbook. Serious violations may result in dismissal from the orchestra.

## **VI. MISCELLANEOUS (BUT IMPORTANT) ITEMS**

**A. PRIVATE LESSONS:** Although not required, private lessons give students the opportunity to get more individualized attention on their instrument. With individualized instruction, a student can build the technical skills necessary to become a very proficient performer both as a soloist and orchestral player. It's amazing to see what students can accomplish with private lessons! Every student in the LHS Orchestra program is encouraged to take advantage of the opportunity to study privately.

**B. ORCHESTRA WEBSITE:** The orchestra has a website ([www.LassiterOrchestra.org](http://www.LassiterOrchestra.org)) that was created to increase teacher/student/parent communication and interaction. On the site there is important information for parents, students, and visitors. In addition, there will be media files available to download and playback on your own technology that will assist with student practice and listening skills.

**C. FINANCES AND FUNDRAISING:** Each year, the orchestra requires funding for new music, instruments, repairs, classroom supplies, and teaching aids. Only a small portion of the orchestra budget is funded by the school and the remaining portion of our budget comes in the form of fund-raising and donations. For this reason, it is very essential that each of the members “pull their own weight” financially by paying the student fee and helping with the fund-raising activities. Fundraisers are designed to assist the orchestra to purchase new instruments, repair old instruments, purchase music and educational materials. This money may also be used to raise money for special events and trips. Keep in mind that fundraising is not mandatory, but it is highly encouraged since everyone uses school equipment and supplies. Monetary donations are welcome and are fully tax deductible. When paying money to the orchestra, please write the student’s name on each check and envelope. For trips, students may be assigned individual accounts for record keeping purposes only. There will be no refunds of monies raised or paid, at any time during the year, should a student not continue in the orchestra program. Upon graduation or transfer to another school, monies remaining in a student’s account will be transferred into the general orchestra fund. The only exception made would be a “sibling” transfer from one child’s account to another.

#### **D. ADDITIONAL PERFORMANCE OPPORTUNITIES**

**Solo and Ensemble Festival:** Every year, orchestra members have the option to participate in a Solo and Ensemble Adjudicated Event. These events provide individual assessment and motivation for many students to perform as a soloist or in a small ensemble. They will perform for a judge, be evaluated on their performance, and receive written comments. Students who are interested in being involved in this activity are strongly encouraged to have the additional help of a private teacher. More information will be made available closer to the event.

**District Honors Orchestra:** Each year, students may audition to participate in the Honors Orchestra. This event brings together our most advanced students from all CCSD high schools to rehearse and perform challenging music. Additional rehearsals and performances are required. A special guest clinician works with the honors orchestra each year. More information will be made available closer to the event.

**GMEA All-State Orchestra:** The All-State Orchestra is formed each year to bring the top musicians from the state together to perform a concert. There are four high school orchestras: 9/10 string and full orchestra and the 11/12 string and full orchestra. Auditions are held in two rounds, usually October and January, and the event takes place in early March.

**Youth Orchestras:** The Atlanta metro area is fortunate to have a plethora of additional performing opportunities available for string students. Please see the orchestra website for a list of area youth orchestras.

**E. ORCHESTRA TRIPS:** These are fun opportunities for students to enjoy both educational and recreational activities outside the classroom. ***These trips are considered a privilege and must be earned by the students.*** Students who wish to participate in this activity must have a good academic and citizenship record in every class. **Students must earn a 2.0 minimum GPA (with no failing grades) and satisfactory school behavior EVERY GRADING PERIOD.** Students who do not meet these requirements, have shown a record of discipline problems, have missed any required orchestra activities or owe money to the orchestra will not be allowed to participate. **All decisions about the trip are at the discretion of the director.** Trips are usually scheduled in the spring and must pass school board approval.



**F. LHS VARSITY LETTER IN MUSIC:** The LHS Varsity Letter in Music, awarded at the Lassiter Orchestra's annual banquet, is intended to recognize, and reward those students who demonstrate and maintain musical excellence in the classroom and beyond. The 3 types of letters one can receive at Lassiter are: Music, Academic, and/or Athletic. All music students can "Letter" at Lassiter. The Music Awards publicly acknowledge musical achievement of students who earn a set number of points during an academic year. Students can earn a Music Letter plus yearly Star/Bar Merits during their four years of high school.

**G. FINE ARTS DIPLOMA SEAL:** The Lassiter Fine Arts Department was selected by the Georgia State Board of Education to be awarded the Fine Arts Diploma Seal Pathway. Music students who select this distinctive pathway AND meet the criteria listed below may apply for this honor in the spring of their senior year. Students will be awarded the Fine Arts Diploma Seal at graduation and will also be recognized at the Lassiter High School Awards Assembly each April.

Students will:

- Complete 4 years (8 semesters) as an enrolled student in orchestra. Audit students are not eligible for this honor. Transcripts will be verified.
- Participate in 2 orchestra-related extracurricular (outside of regular school hours) activities. This means activities associated with your specific subject area that require extra commitment and effort.

Examples of these types of activities include:

- All State Ensembles
  - Orchestra Camp
  - College/Pro Game Performances
  - Community Event Performances
  - District Honor Ensembles
  - Governor's Honors Program
  - Kiwanis Entertainment Contests
  - Orchestra Leadership Council
  - Performing with Metro-Atlanta youth orchestras (MYSO, AYSO, EYSO)
  - PTSA Reflections
  - Private Study
  - Orchestra Teaching Assistant (via LHS Mentor Program)
  - Touring Ensembles
  - Tri-M National Music Honor Society
  - Tutoring Middle School and Fellow High School Peers
- Complete 20 hours of community service related to music over the four-year period at Lassiter. Concerts and rehearsals beyond the school day are considered community service hours. Students must account for the minimum of 20 hours verified by parent and teacher.
  - Present a 3/5-minute capstone video presentation focusing on your experiences in the orchestra program at Lassiter. You will include statements and explanations about how the Orchestra Program has impacted your life and predict how your involvement in the arts will impact your future self. Application and video submission deadlines will be published in early spring. If you have any questions, please contact Dr. Laux.

## VII. CALENDAR OF EVENTS

The Lassiter Orchestras will perform several times throughout the school year. The concert dates are on the orchestra calendar, but **please remember that the calendar is subject to change. If there are changes, you will be notified, and all updates will be shown on the orchestra website.**

**Please mark your calendars now so that you reserve these important concert dates and other deadlines.**

<https://lassiterorchestra.org/calendar>



## VIII. PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

### CONGRATULATIONS!!

Your decision to provide your child with a quality education in music is an investment in your child's future. In making it possible for your child to continue to play a musical instrument, you are providing the opportunity for self-expression, creativity, and achievement. Numerous studies indicate that parental attitude, support, and involvement are important factors in a child's ability to successfully learn to play and enjoy music. Like any skill, interest counts far more than talent. With strong support from you, playing music will become a natural part of your child's life.

*Should there ever be any doubt in your mind about any phase of your child's participation in the orchestra program, I am always willing to talk with you. Feel free to call, set up a meeting, or e-mail anytime!*

### A. BENEFITS

**For the student**, music participation enhances: Problem solving, goal setting, physical coordination, self-confidence and esteem, poise, teamwork, self-expression, memory skills, concentration, and much more!

**For the family**, music participation offers opportunities for shared family experiences, including musical event attendance, family music making, performing for, and with, family and friends, learning about the lives of composers and the cultural heritage of many civilizations, a sense of accomplishment and pride for the entire family.

### B. HOW YOU FIT IN

Always keep in mind that your support is an essential element in your child's success with music study.

*Schedule Practice Times:* Music achievement requires effort *over a period of time*. The time in orchestra rehearsal is limited. New concepts learned at school need daily personal practice time by your child at home for these new skills to be developed. You can help your child by:

- Providing a quiet place in which to practice
- Remaining nearby during practice times as often as possible
- Scheduling a consistent daily time for practice

### C. TO MAINTAIN YOUR CHILD'S INTEREST

- Talk with your child if his or her interest begins to decline
- Increase your enthusiasm and involvement in your child's playing

**D. WHAT TO DO:** To give your child the best possible support, you should:

- Remind your child to bring instrument and music to orchestra class
- Encourage your child to play for family and friends
- Offer compliments and encouragement regularly
- Expose your child to a wide variety of music, including concerts and recitals
- Make sure your child's instrument is always well maintained
- Listen to your child practice, and acknowledge improvement
- Help your child build a personal music library
- Make certain that your child is on time for all school rehearsals and performances
- Encourage your child to make a commitment to his or her music studies
- If possible, obtain private lessons with a qualified instructor
- Get to know your child's teacher

## E. WHAT TO AVOID

- Using practice as a punishment
- Insisting your child play for others when he/she doesn't want to
- Ridiculing or making fun of mistakes or less-than-perfect playing

**F. LASSITER HIGH SCHOOL ORCHESTRA ASSOCIATION (LHSOA):** The LHS Orchestra Association is the parent booster organization for the LHS Trojan Orchestras. The goal and function of this group is for all parents to help with Orchestra functions and to supply needed capital for functions, equipment and events that are not financed by the school system.

**Meetings:** There are only 3 meetings per year, so it is crucial to attend each meeting as the Orchestras cannot function without this vital support from the parents. There are enough students and parents in this orchestra program that all events can be covered if everyone participates in one event. This may only be 3 - 4 hours or less of your time once all year.

### **Our Mission:**

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

- Support the Lassiter High School Orchestra Program
- Enhance music education
- Communicate with parents
- Encourage students at all levels of participation

LHSOA 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 [lassiterorchestra.org](http://lassiterorchestra.org) website in general and through CTLS Parent newsletters, the Facebook page, and email correspondence.

### **LHSOA Membership:**

As a co-curricular activity at Lassiter High School, the Orchestra program asks parents to pay a \$175 fee to the organization. Payment makes you a member of the *Lassiter High School Orchestra Association (LHSOA)*. 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.

**The LHSOA asks for a minimum of \$175 for the year.** The fees help to cover the cost of the program that is not covered by Cobb County. A complete itemized list of all financial obligations will be made available and will be discussed in detail at the first LHSOA meeting of the year. If a family has trouble meeting orchestra financial obligation such as the student fee, the Director should be notified either in person or by e-mail. Cases will be treated with strict confidence. *Note: LHSOA is a registered 501(c)(3) non-profit organization with the IRS and your membership may be tax deductible. Consult with your tax advisor.*

Cobb County only provides funds for a small portion of our expenses, but the LHSOA 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 purchased or replaced, and the orchestra does not get funds from the county for these items.

### The Student Fee includes:

✓ Supplemental instruction through workshops, clinics, and fall/winter camps ✓ Equipment such as tuners, shoulder rests, batteries, rock stops, rosin, cloths, steel wool, etc. ✓ Yearly purchase of new music for orchestra and small ensembles, method books ✓ Guest instructors, performers, or clinicians ✓ Bus transportation on some orchestra field trips ✓ Entry fees and recording 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, after concerts, for workshops, and hospitality events ✓ Assist with purchases of new instruments and equipment ✓ Instrument and bow repairs and replacement ✓ The Lassiter Orchestra T-Shirt ✓ Student ticket to the annual awards banquet

Preferred payment method is using a credit/debit card on our website at <https://www.lassiterorchestra.org>. We also accept checks (made payable to LHSOA) that can be sent into school with your child and placed in the lock box in the front of the room.

As a Booster Club, we count on your support to help us achieve these goals. Participation is the key to making this program excel . . . our success depends on no less than 100% participation. Thank you for your support!

NOTE: The Student Fee should be paid in full by September 1. Payment plans and alternative fundraising opportunities are available to assist families with covering the fee.

**FUNDRAISING:** Fundraising for the Orchestra is primarily dependent upon participation in the Lassiter High School Orchestra Association by paying fees. The balance of funds needed to fund the Orchestra program are supplemented by our Program Book Advertisement campaign, Friends of the Orchestra donations, and our popular and successful poinsettia fundraising vent every November.

**FUND RAISER PROFIT DISTRIBUTION:** Fund raiser profit will go to benefit the LHS Orchestra for capital improvement projects to benefit the majority of the students in the orchestra or for a community service project. All students are expected to participate as these fund raisers go to benefit all students in the orchestra. If a fund raiser is designated for a particular trip, then the proceeds will be distributed evenly among all participants going on the trip.

**PARENT VOLUNTEERS and CHAPERONES:** The orchestra is always looking for parents to help with fundraisers, concerts, receptions, photography, video recording, etc. If you are available to volunteer, please contact [president@lassiterorchestra.org](mailto:president@lassiterorchestra.org).

## LHSO Handbook Acceptance

Parents and Students: Once you have read this handbook in its entirety, please complete the [LHSO Handbook Acceptance Form](#) together.

Completing the form acknowledges that you have read and understand the policies of the Lassiter High School Orchestra. The form also provides Dr. Laux with your T-shirt size and contact information for the student and parent(s).





**OPPORTUNITY**  
**RESPECT**  
**COLLABORATION**  
**HONESTY**  
**EFFORT**  
**SELF-DISCIPLINE**  
**TRUST**  
**RESPONSIBILITY**  
**ATTITUDE**