TO THE STUDENT

Welcome to the Lawrence Junior High School Orchestra program! As the director, I am confident that you will enjoy being a part of an organization of outstanding musicians that strives to maintain a high degree of musical excellence. There is a lot of hard work required, both in the classroom and individual practice at home, but when you give your best, the results will be amazing! I feel it is extremely important that we all realize the responsibility we have to each other. Each person plays an important role in contributing to the success of our orchestra. With focus and determination we can learn to play the notes on the page. With heart and soul we can begin to make music out of the notes. I look forward to a wonderful year of experiencing the joy that making music together can bring!

TO THE PARENTS

As the orchestra director, I am here to ensure that your child receives a quality musical education. The benefits to musical training are endless and, if taken seriously, can be an investment in your child’s future. Numerous studies have shown that being involved in music leads to success in many areas of life. Making music together builds teamwork and discipline while providing the unique opportunity for self-expression and creativity. I look forward to working together to encourage and support each student in the orchestra program!

There will be many opportunities for students to grow as musicians and improve their playing skills through group rehearsals, sectionals, and performances. It is extremely important for the success of the individual as well as the success of the overall program that students not only participate, but give 100% effort in every situation. Should you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me!

Sincerely,

Sofia Velazquez, Orchestra director

Music is a gift we all share equally. Whether we create it or simply listen, it’s a gift that can soothe, inspire, and unite us, often when we need it most—and expect it least.
BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS

Students should exhibit the qualities of an outstanding musician in the classroom and at all musical events both on and off school campus.

1. Be Punctual - Early is on time, on time is late and LATE IS UNACCEPTABLE.
   (If you will be late or can’t make it, please call!)
2. Be Prepared - Always have your music, pencil, instrument (including rosin and shoulder rest) and brain for every rehearsal. Be prepared to contribute to the rehearsal and/or performance.
3. Be Polite – Look and listen to your conductor and each other.
4. Be Careful – Take care of our equipment; care about what we are working for.
5. NO GUM, FOOD, OR DRINKS (except for water) during rehearsal.
   (Especially no gum chewing during performances!!)
6. Nails must be maintained short and should not extend beyond the fingertip. No long fingernails.

CLASSROOM PROCEDURES

1. Enter the classroom calmly and quietly BEFORE THE BELL RINGS. Immediately get your instrument (and accessories) and be seated and remain seated for the entire period.
2. Your instrument should be placed on the left side of your chair. After getting your planner and music folder out, place all other materials under your chair.
3. Within 2 minutes, you should have your instrument unpacked, bow rosined, music and pencil on the stand and be ready to tune.
4. When we are tuning, NOTHING should interrupt it. Do not talk, do not ask to go anywhere, do not make any other sound that could be distracting.
5. Once rehearsal/class begins, there should be as few of disruptions and distractions as possible.
6. During rehearsal, all musicians must have correct posture – feet flat, knees at a 90 degree angle, backs straight and away from the back of the chair, shoulders relaxed.
7. “Business” will be taken care of at the end of class.
8. Wait for the director to tell you to pack up. Always wipe your instrument off and loosen your bow when you are finished playing.
9. After you have put your instrument away, you may turn in any papers or take care of other orchestra business. Otherwise, you need to go back to your seats. You sections must be seated to be dismissed.
10. The bell is not your signal to get up and leave. The director will dismiss you.

Class Disruptions/Failure to Follow Guidelines:

- Verbal warning, a loss of daily points and students must sign a Citation (used to determine Citizenship Grade)
- If ALL daily points are lost, student must pack up and complete an Action Plan that must be signed by a parent/guardian and returned at the beginning of the next class meeting.
- Phone conference with parent (or a scheduled conference at school, if needed)
- Referral to office

*Please note: If a student severely disrupts class to the extent that the educational process is disrupted, the student will immediately be sent to the office regardless of previous warnings or actions.
**GRADING POLICY**

*Scale: 90-100% = A  80-89% = B  70-79% = C  60-69% = D  0-59% = F*

**CLASSWORK = 20%**

1. **Daily Points (Orchestra Etiquette)**
   
   Each student will have the opportunity to earn 20 points each day. Points are determined by their participation and contribution to the rehearsal and meeting the Behavior Expectations. Due to the nature of this class, it is difficult for lessons and activities to be made up; therefore it is necessary for students to be at school and to be at class on time.
   
   - No points will be earned if a student is absent (Students can make up points by practicing and filling out a “Daily Point Make Up Log” then getting it signed by a parent/guardian and turning it in within 1 week of the absence).
   
   - No points will be earned if a student forgets his/her instrument (If the instrument is broken, a note from the parent explaining the situation will be required).
   
   - Up to 10 points will be deducted for being tardy, chewing gum, having long fingernails, or not having their music, pencil, or shoulder rest.
   
   - If a student cannot play because of an injury or broken instrument, a written assignment will be given.

2. **Extra Rehearsals**
   
   If necessary, after school rehearsals and/or sectionals may be scheduled. They will most likely occur in the weeks before big concerts, contests and any music festivals we participate in. Participation is mandatory. If a student needs to be absent, a written excuse must be submitted to the director in advance of the missed rehearsal. If a student is tardy, up to 25 points will be deducted.

**HOMEWORK = 10%**

1. **Homework**
   
   Written assignments may be given; practicing/preparation for rehearsals and performances is expected!

**ASSESSMENTS (Tests=35% and Performances=35%)**

1. **Playing Tests**
   
   Students can expect to be tested AT LEAST twice a month. These tests will cover the skills and materials being covered in class at that time. Most playing tests will be announced ahead of time and will be worth anywhere from 50-100 points depending on the length of the test. It is expected that each student make continual growth both on his/her instrument and in understanding musical concepts. Students missing the test due to an excused absence, or students who give an unsatisfactory performance on the test will have one week to make it up. It is the student’s responsibility to schedule a make-up time with the instructor.

2. **Written Exams**
   
   May be given periodically to assess comprehension of information given in class

3. **Performances**
   
   Grades are based on participation, behavior, proper attire, performance, and tear down. Listening to other performing ensembles is also an important part of learning. Students are required to stay for the entire performance in which they are participating.

**EXTRA CREDIT**

1. Attendance at any other music concerts (a program with your name on it must be turned in for verification)

2. Participation in Honors Orchestra, Solo and Ensemble Festival, and Las Vegas Youth Orchestra
Semester Grade (Calculated as follows):
\[(40\% = 9 \text{ weeks}) + (40\% = 9 \text{ weeks}) + (20\% = \text{semester exam}) = \text{Semester Grade}\]

Citizenship Grade
This grade is determined by the student’s Classwork category grade and the number of Citations that have been documented.
O=Exemplary Behavior (A+ in Classwork and no citations): Students exhibit outstanding behavior in the classroom.
S=Satisfactory Behavior (A in classwork, but 1-2 Citations): Students exhibit acceptable behavior in the classroom.
N=Needs Improvement (B in Classwork and 3-4 Citations): Some behavior does not follow rehearsal guidelines
U=Unsatisfactory Behavior (C or lower in Classwork and 5-6 Citations): Most behavior does not follow guidelines

You Must Understand the Following Information!!
Lawrence Junior High School we will not permit students to be pulled out of classes to practice or perform unless they have a 2.0 minimum GPA. This grade point average is a school wide policy. There are no exceptions to this policy. I expect orchestra members to be aware of progress made not only in orchestra but the all of the classes of which they are enrolled in. The way to keep track of this is simple; come to school on time everyday, always do all of your homework, and study and pass all exams. If you find that you need any extra assistance you must seek extra help to be tutored by your other teachers, tutor, or even myself. It is very important that you are available to rehearse and perform with the orchestra.

ATTENDANCE AND MAKE-UP PROCEDURES
Please remember that the educational experiences lost during an absence are irretrievable as the interaction in the classroom setting can seldom be duplicated through make-up work. Being absent from school will have a negative impact on your individual learning, but will also affect the entire orchestra. Should you find it necessary to miss class, you need to check with your stand partner and/or section leader regarding what you missed. It is the student’s responsibility to turn in their make up work in a timely manner without being reminded!

Attendance Expectations for Performances
In order for the group to be complete and function as a cohesive unit, all members must be prepared for, and attend every concert. Performance dates are given at the beginning of the year so that students and parents will have time to plan accordingly.

- **Excessive absences from school:** If a student is not able to perform their part at an acceptable level because of missing too many classes/rehearsals OR if they miss more than 1 day during the week prior to a performance, they may not be allowed to play in the concert. This will be decided upon after careful consideration by the director (it might also include a conference and/or playing audition). Students will be given the opportunity to earn up to 65% of the Concert Points by choosing to complete 1 of 3 of the reports on the “Missed Concert Assignment Form.” Partial credit is still better than a “0”!

- **Excused absence:** In the event that a student must miss a concert, the director must be given notice at least 1 week prior to the performance. Make-up work will be given to the student. If completed, students may earn up to 80% of the concert points. If the director does not have prior notice that a student will not be attending the concert, but they do inform me of their excuse within 3 days after the performance, the director will give them the option of completing a make-up assignment. Students may earn up to 65% of the concert points. Again, partial credit is much better than a zero!

- **Absence due to Discipline Issue:** If a student is placed on RPC or Suspension on concert day, they will not be allowed to perform at the concert. If a student misses class during the 2 weeks prior to a performance because they have been placed in In-House, or on RPC or Suspension, they MAY NOT be allowed to perform at the concert. This will be left to the director’s discretion, so students should check with the director upon their return to school. If they are allowed to perform, they will lose their seat and be moved to the back of the section. If they are not allowed to perform, a make-up assignment will be give.
HOME PRACTICE
It is essential for students to put in quality practice time at home. Once a concept is presented in class it should be practiced at home so it is ready for the next class meeting. Class time should be used for students to work on their skills for playing together as an ensemble. Our orchestra is a team and the entire team suffers if one of its members is unprepared. Students should be ready for a playing quiz at any time to make sure they have practiced the material we have covered in class. In order for the practice time to be productive, students must practice consistently and it should be done in a quiet room without the interruption of TV, phone calls, family, and friends.

**Proper Practice Techniques** = The performance you want
**Improper Practice Techniques** = A waste of everyone’s time

**10-20 MINUTES/5 TIMES A WEEK WILL ALLOW YOU TO BE A PART OF THE SOLUTION, NOT THE PROBLEM!**

CONCERT ATTIRE
Concert attire is important to the overall appearance of our orchestra. Presentation (how you look) is 80% of it! All students need to have the uniform listed below for our first performance.

**Ladies:** Black Lawrence JHS Orchestra Polo, black pants, black socks, and black dress shoes.

**Gentlemen:** Black Lawrence JHS Orchestra Polo, black pants, black socks, and black dress shoes.

ACTIVITIES AND TRIPS
Depending on the success of the orchestra, opportunities may arise for us to participate in special off-campus activities and/or trips. Participation in such activities must be earned and should be viewed as a privilege. If a student has worked hard (attended all required rehearsals and performances) and exhibited a pattern of trustworthy behavior throughout the year, then they will be invited to participate. Otherwise, I will take into consideration the student’s academic and discipline record in my class as well as all other classes before a decision is made. If a student has been placed on RPC or Suspension during the year, they will need to check with the director to see if they will be allowed to participate. Should we decide to travel, all details about the trip will be sent home well in advance and students will have an opportunity to fundraise to help cover the cost of the trip.

FUNDRAISING
Our orchestra will participate in several fundraising events this year. These are very important because they give our orchestra the necessary funds to buy new music, equipment, and attend various field trips. A fundraising activity is only successful if everyone participates and since EVERYONE benefits from the money earned, it is expected that everyone contribute in some way. If you choose not to participate in the fundraiser, a donation is always appreciated!
PRIVATE LESSONS
Private lessons provide students the opportunity to work one-on-one with a professional instrumentalist. There are so many benefits to this, including individualized instruction that is tailored specifically to the needs of the student. In the classroom, it is often difficult for one teacher to get around to every student and provide the guidance they need to truly excel on their instrument. I will certainly do the best I can, but in order for students to reach their maximum potential, private lessons are strongly encouraged.

Please keep in mind that finding a private teacher can take a bit of effort. You need to find someone you can work well with and that will inspire and motivate you to take your playing to the next level. If you find you are not happy with a private instructor, DO NOT GIVE UP! Try someone different and please ask me if you need guidance or suggestions. Once you are committed to your instrument and lessons, you will find that the amount of progress you make will be worth every bit of time and money you have invested.

EXTRA EXPERIENCE OPPORTUNITIES

HONOR ORCHESTRA
Each year, all orchestra students have the opportunity to audition for the CCSD Honor Orchestra. Students wishing to participate in the group must first audition and if chosen, they will be part of an ensemble made up of the finest musicians in the district. The Honor Orchestra will be conducted by a well-known guest conductor. It rehearses several times and performs one concert.

LAS VEGAS YOUTH ORCHESTRA
The Las Vegas Youth Orchestras provide students with an opportunity to participate in an ensemble that will enhance their musical knowledge and experience. There are four levels in the LVYO program (Ensemble, Sinfonia, Symphony, Philharmonic) and members are selected based on their performance at an audition held in May for the following school year. If chosen, you will work with other student musicians and some of the best coaches and conductors from the Las Vegas area.

SOLO AND ENSEMBLE FESTIVAL
This festival gives students an opportunity to perform as an individual soloist or in small ensembles, and to be rated according to district festival guidelines. Any student wishing to participate is encouraged to do so, but should understand that a time commitment is necessary in order to be sufficiently prepared. Help with the music selection and preparation process will be given by the director and/or a private teacher (if the student is taking private lessons).
**Orchestra Fee**

All students are asked to pay a $30.00 course fee. This fee will include an orchestra polo, method book, and music folder.

**Stringed Instrument Condition**

The instrument should be varnished, not painted. Paint robs the wood of its resonance, but an instrument that is poorly varnished (too much or too little) will also create poor sound.

**School Instrument Rental**

There are very limited school instruments, and will be provided only to those students who are in great financial need. In order to use a school instrument a rental contract will need to be signed by the parent/guardian. Students who use school instruments will be expected to maintain the cases and keep the instruments in good playing condition. Remember, you are financially responsible for any damaged or lost instruments. **NOTE:** There is NO instrument insurance available for the use of school instruments. The director will determine all fines. If the student continually treats the school instrument with disrespect and/or if the student carelessly damages the school instrument, the director WILL NOT permit the student further access to any school instrument. The school rental fee for the use of the instrument for the year is $30.00.

**SUGGESTED MATERIALS FOR ALL MUSICIANS**

*Some items may be purchased from our LJHS school banker and picked up from the Orchestra Office*

1. Folder to keep practice copies and other handouts organized
2. Pencil
3. Fingernail clippers
4. Instrument Cleaning Cloth (Old, **CLEAN** t-shirts or socks work well for this)
5. Method Books:
   - BEGINNING ORCHESTRA-String Basics, book 1 ($10)
   - JUNIOR VARSITY ORCHESTRA-String Basics, book 2 ($10)
   - VARSITY ORCHESTRA- Superior Strings in Sixteen Weeks ($10)
6. Rosin ..........................................................$5
7. Orchestra polo shirt .................................................$17
8. Metronome/Tuners ..........................................................$30
9. Replacement Strings:
   - Violin/Viola .................................................$10
   - Cello/Bass ..........................................................$15
10. Wire Music Stand –These can be purchased at any local music store and are necessary if students are to have a productive practice session at home.
11. Orchestra “spirit” T-Shirt ....................................................$8
12. 

*1-9 are “Must-Haves” in order for students to be successful in my class. If it will be a financial strain for your family to purchase some or all of the materials, please speak to me individually to discuss other options.*

*All materials, except for the Orchestra shirt and fingernail clippers, can also be purchased at local music stores.*

*For anything you decide to purchase, please pay our school banker cash, or money order made out to Lawrence Junior High School in an envelope with the following information on the outside:*
   1. Student Name and Class Period
   2. Date
   3. Amount of money included in envelope and what you’re paying for.

*Upon receiving the money, students will be given a receipt. Students must show the receipt to Ms. Velazquez in order to receive items purchased. No receipt, No items, No exceptions.*
## 2012-2013 Calendar of Events

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<td>First day of school</td>
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<td>September 3&lt;sup&gt;rd&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<td>September 19&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Open House (Varsity Performance)</td>
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<td>September 29&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<td>October 12&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<td>October 18&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>CCSD/ LVYO Fall Concert, Henderson Pavilion</td>
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<td>October 26&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<td>October 30&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>MS Honor Orchestra Rehearsal, Clark HS</td>
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<td>November 6&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>CCSD Honor Orchestra Rehearsal, Clark HS</td>
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<td>Professional Development Day (No School for Students)</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 8&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>CCSD Honor Orchestra Rehearsal, Clark HS</td>
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<td>November 12&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Veteran’s Day, No School</td>
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<td>November 15&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;-17&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>CCSD Honor Orchestra Rehearsal, Clark HS</td>
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<td>November 17&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>CCSD Honor Orchestra Concert, Ham Hall on UNLV Campus 2:00pm</td>
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<td>November 22&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt;-23&lt;sup&gt;rd&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Thanksgiving Day and Family Day (No School)</td>
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<td>December 8&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>CCSD/ LVYO Winter Concert, Ham Hall, 7:00 pm</td>
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<td>December 13&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Spring Valley HS Winter Concert, (Varsity Performance), SVHS Theater</td>
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<td>December 18&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Orchestra Winter Concert, LJHS Gym, 6:30 pm</td>
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<td>December 19&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Band Winter Concert, LJHS Gym, 6:30 pm</td>
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<td>December 20&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Choir Winter Concert, LJHS Gym, 6:30 pm</td>
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<td>December 21&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Winter Assembly, LJHS</td>
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<td>December 24&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<td>January 16&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;-18&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<td>January 26&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Viola Festival, Coronado HS</td>
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<td>February 18&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>President’s Day, No School</td>
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<td>Professional Development Day (No School for Students)</td>
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<td>February 23&lt;sup&gt;rd&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Middle School Solo &amp; Ensemble Festival, Clark HS</td>
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<td>CCSD MS Advanced Orchestra Festival, Clark HS</td>
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<td>April 5&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;-7&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Nevada A.S.T.A. Festival</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 27&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Advanced Orchestra Spring Trip, Disneyland Anaheim, CA</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt;-2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>CCSD/ LVYO Spring Concert, Ham Hall, 7:00 pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 21&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Choir Spring Concert, LJHS Gym, 6:30 pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 22&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Orchestra Spring Concert, LJHS Gym 6:30 pm</td>
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<td>Professional Development Day (No School for Students)</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 27&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Memorial Day, No School</td>
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<td>June 4&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;-6&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Semester Exams</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 7&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>End of fourth grading period</td>
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PLEDGE OF COMMITMENT
This page must be signed and turned in by Friday, September 7th.

Student’s Name (Print): ______________________ Period (Please circle the appropriate class) 1 2 3 4 5 6

I have read and understand the policies, expectations, and responsibilities set forth in the Lawrence JHS Orchestra Handbook. I pledge to contribute my personal best and to practice positive and professional musicianship at all times.

Student Signature ______________________________ Date ____________

I have read and understand the policies, expectations, and responsibilities set forth in the Lawrence Junior High School Orchestra Handbook. I agree to support the orchestra to the best of my ability and to help my child fulfill their part of the commitment. I will encourage my child toward success and applaud them when they achieve it.

Parent Signature ______________________ Date ____________

*****************************************************************************************

LAWRENCE JHS FINE ARTS WEB SITE PERMISSION FORM

_____ I allow my child’s picture to appear on the Lawrence JHS Fine Arts Department (initial) web site. I understand that my child’s name or any of my child’s personal information will NOT be posted.

_____ I do not allow my child’s photograph to appear on the Lawrence JHS Fine Arts (initial) Department web site. If a group photo is taken and is posted, I understand that My child’s face will be digitally blurred.

Parent/Guardian Signature: ______________________________ Date: ______________