
Pittsburg High School Orchestra Department

Ryan A. Elliott – Director of Orchestra

Pittsburg High School
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August 17th, 2007

Dear Pittsburg Orchestra Member,

Greetings! I hope the summer break has treated everyone well. Hopefully it has been relaxing and enjoyable.

This school year we have many exciting developments; we have new chairs and a big orchestra with a lot of talent. The opportunities that we have to display our talents begin with you. We will be successful if each individual student decides to be a team player. Make the decision to be part of an excellent program by giving your best as an individual. With all of us striving to do our very best, great things are possible. We cannot do it without each and everyone of you!

In our handbook, you will find policies, procedures, and other important information regarding the Pittsburg Orchestra program. Please take the time to read this material, as the success of our orchestra depends upon each individual working toward the same goals. Please have your parents sign the Instrument Care Agreement (if you play a school owned instrument), Student Health Registration, and Acknowledgment Form, and return them to me by Friday, August 31, 2007.

I will be happy to answer any questions anyone may have. Please feel free to contact me before or after school.

Sincerely,

Ryan A. Elliott
Director of Orchestra

FORWARD

The purpose of this handbook is to provide the students, parents, and school personnel information about the Pittsburg Orchestra program. Another purpose is to communicate the behaviors and values, which will make the Pittsburg Orchestra among the very finest.

Goals of the Pittsburg Orchestra Program

- To encourage young people to become productive citizens upon graduation.
- To provide a well rounded musical experience, which students can enjoy and continue to appreciate for the rest of their lives.
- To develop a well organized program using student leadership and student abilities.
- To help each student develop musically to the highest possible degree.
- To have a positive impact on the individual, families, as well as their communities, and cultures.

"What we hope ever to do with ease, we must learn first to do with diligence."

Samuel Johnson - 1709-1784, British Author

Thousands of musicians have contributed to the proud Pittsburg Orchestra tradition. The PHS Orchestra program can develop into a model. The real importance of our bands has been the elevation of people's lives through musically artistic experiences, inspirational performances, a disciplined, structured approach to attaining excellence, opportunities to develop interpersonal relationship skills and cultivating leadership potentialities. None of these proud traditions or lofty goals could ever be reality without Pittsburg's finest young people serving as its musical representatives. It is self evident that the quality of the program available to the students would be greatly diminished if the orchestra membership would be reduced to young people involved with breaking school rules or worse federal, state, or civil laws. For these reasons it is extremely important that each and every PHS Orchestra member understand the responsibility for only the best behavior that they automatically assume when they accept membership into this organization.

A Word About the Orchestra Room

A great effort must be made by **all of us** to keep our space neat and in the best shape possible. **POOR HOUSEKEEPING AND DISRESPECT THROUGH SLOPPINESS WILL NOT BE TOLERATED!** Please put everything back in its place when rehearsal, sectionals, or individual practice time is complete.

Everyone is also welcome to come to the orchestra room whenever schedules permit throughout the school day, before or after school. It is during these times that everyone be trustworthy, as members of this orchestra program to take care not only of our room, but also of our instruments and equipment.

CONCERT STRINGS

The concert orchestra is comprised of instrumentalists who have the desire to participate in a complete organization. The concert orchestra performs several concerts during the year and participates in the district and state music festivals.

Membership requires total dedication with maximum effort and involvement in all aspects of playing and performance.

Chair Challenges

Students who feel they are deserving of advancement within their section may challenge the person sitting ahead of them. The challenge procedure is as follows:

1. Obtain a challenge form from the director. Fill out the form and return it to the director. Both participants in the challenge must sign the form.
2. The director chooses the music for the challenge. The music is chosen from all scales known to date and from selections being prepared for the next performance.
3. The challenge will be held approximately one week after the challenge form is turned in to the director.
4. A challenger or challengee who loses must wait two weeks before submitting another challenge form.
5. A forfeiture will result if the person being challenged refuses to sign the form OR if one of the participants is absent or tardy for the challenge.
6. In case of a tie, the players will remain in their original position.

Private Instruction

Private instruction is a tremendous aid in the development of a student's musical knowledge. It also helps improve the overall quality of the orchestra. Every student is encouraged to participate in private instruction. Any student interested in studying privately should see the director for recommendations and schedules.

SCHOOL-OWNED INSTRUMENTS

The orchestra department will provide some instruments for those students who do not own their own. An Instrument Care Agreement should be filled out and signed by the student and his/her parent(s)/guardian(s) at the beginning of the school year. Each orchestra member is responsible for the proper care, condition, and repairs beyond **normal** use during the length of the agreement. Any damages or serious malfunctions should be reported to the director at once. Damages due to negligence of the student will be charged to the student. Damages beyond normal use and negligence will be determined by the director. **ANY MISUSE OF ANY KIND WILL NOT BE TOLERATED.** The individual responsible for that instrument will absorb any damage occurring through negligence or mistreatment. A good general rule is: If I don't play it in orchestra, I'm not going to touch it! So please, show everyone that we deserve nice things and **take care of everything we already have.**

A privately owned instrument is the responsibility of the student who owns it. Students should check with their parent(s)/guardian(s) to see that the instrument is included on their homeowners insurance policy. Before purchasing an instrument, students are encouraged to consult with the director. Students are also encouraged to purchase the extended warranty provided by the company from which the instrument was purchased.

All instruments should be kept in excellent playing condition and should be cleaned and polished regularly.

Instrument Storage Lockers and Keys

At the beginning of the school year, students will be issued instrument storage lockers and the keys to the lockers. This locker and key is the responsibility of the student for the school year. Any loss of key or damage to the lockers will result in loss of privileges and repayment of any damage or loss.

Please note: All issued keys will be returned by the last day of school in the calendar year or fines will be imposed.

CODE OF CONDUCT/REHEARSAL EXPECTATIONS

Our ability to progress and achieve both as individuals and as an ensemble is dependent on our ability to function in an orderly, systematic manner. Each of us is dependent on the other, not only for high musical standards, but for high moral standards, strong character and a sense of responsibility to our group. Just a few weak musicians or one undisciplined individual can have a detrimental effect on the positive effort of the other ensemble members. To help communicate the values and behaviors that are necessary for success, the Code of Conduct and Rehearsal Expectations have been established.

Code of Conduct

Each student must strive to demonstrate a sense of responsibility in the following manner:

- a. Bring all necessary items essential to performance to rehearsal (instrument, music, pencil, planner, uniform, flags, mallets, etc.)
- b. Show supreme respect for every piece of equipment of instrument in the band room.
- c. Attend all special sectionals or extra practices.
- d. Represent your school, community, and ensemble with only the best conduct.

Because of the thousands of dollars in musical instruments and equipment kept in the band room we must all provide a common defense by reporting any activity that is suspicious or might cause damage or indicate theft.

Use only the best manners in the band room. Off-color remarks, foul language and the like are unacceptable.

No public displays of affection please.

Store your instrument in the proper place. Keep music in a music folder and the folder in the folder storage cabinet.

Do not bring food or drink into the band room. Chewing gum is also prohibited.

Rehearsal Expectations

We run on “Central Band Time.” Arrive early to prepare for rehearsals and stay a few minutes late to make sure instruments and equipment are properly stored. The minimum expectation is to be seated with your music, instrument, pencil, and any other necessary equipment before roll is taken or the appointed time for early rehearsals. **TARDINESS IS UNACCEPTABLE! (See the Student and Parent Handbook; page A-2, or the PHS Student Planner; page 4, for consequences for tardies.)**

It is dangerous to chew gum and play an instrument, and people that chew gum during rehearsals tend to chew gum in performances. Therefore, do not chew gum in rehearsals or performances. It is impossible to produce your very best sound without correct playing posture. Even though our chairs make it difficult, when we are playing or performing, please sit on the first few inches your chair.

Be it a student director, guest clinician, or your normal director, always show respect by stopping all conversation when the individual gets on the podium or class begins. Please do not have to be asked to stop talking.

To reach the high level of excellence we have come to expect of ourselves, it is absolutely necessary to mark every detail on our music. Keep a pencil on your stand and use it!

Do not waste rehearsal time. If another section’s problems are dominating the rehearsal, use the time to “fake” through difficult sections of the music. In the early stages of a composition’s rehearsal writing in rhythmic syllables, highlighting dynamics, routing endings (D.C. & D.S.), searching out key signature and accidental traps will not only benefit you, but all other ensemble members as well.

Exert control over yourself. Demand alertness, vitality, musical expression, and a positive attitude.

Raise your hand and be recognized by the director before speaking.

Everyone is strongly encouraged and expected to take music home for practice. Students can also practice in the band room before or after school; just make arrangements with the director. **BOTTOM LINE!** Do nothing to take your attention or another ensemble member's attention away from rehearsal. With everyone pushing hard during the entire class period we can achieve our goals.

Attendance Policy

All performances of the Pittsburg Orchestra are required for all members. Orchestra is a class for which a grade is earned; performances are the test. The following policies are in place regarding potential conflicts with band performances:

It will be the responsibility of the student to make the director aware of conflicts well in advance of performances. Failure to do so will result in loss of grade.

Work and other non-school related activities will be unexcused. Family/church activities will be given appropriate consideration. Any unexcused may result in the dropping of a letter grade.

Only in cases of **emergency or personal illness** will a person be excused from a performance. An unexcused absence from a performance will result in a failing grade for the performance and the student will no longer be eligible to letter in band. Any absence from a performance must be approved by the director **prior to the performance**. Any absence not brought to the director's attention prior to the performance will be considered unexcused.

Attendance Policies for Special Rehearsals

Any student receiving an unexcused absence from a special/extra rehearsal will lose the assigned points for that rehearsal. If the student has two or more unexcused absences from special/extra rehearsals, the student will not be able to participate in the next performance, losing all points for that performance.

Orchestra members will not be excused from special/extra rehearsals except in cases of emergency or personal illness. Please attempt to notify the director before any absence from rehearsal.

Attendance will be taken at the beginning of all rehearsals by the director. Students who are not in their assigned position with proper equipment will be considered tardy. The director will determine what is to be an excused tardy.

Request for an excused absence or tardy should be made one week prior to the rehearsal/performance.

Attendance has a direct effect on the student's grade. In any case, please notify the director before the rehearsal/performance.

Consequences

Orchestra is an ensemble class; therefore grades are earned based upon how well each individual contributes to the entire ensemble. This procedure will take into account: attitude, cooperation, attendance, reliability, and overall musical/marching effort and improvement. The following policies are outlined regarding the grading procedure for band class:

Daily Expectations

Chronic tardiness to class will result in demerits adversely affecting your grade. Tardiness will be considered chronic after the first occurrence and will require any punishment the administration requires. Further tardiness will result in student/teacher conference to discuss the problem. Appropriate action will be taken regarding grade. **(See the Student and Parent Handbook; page A-2, or the PHS Student Planner; page 4, for consequences for tardies.)**

Excessive absences from rehearsal will result in a student/parent/teacher conference to discuss the problem. Again, appropriate action will be taken regarding grade. Participation is a big portion of your daily grade; **you cannot participate if you are not present!**

Student grades will be determined largely by ability to adhere to standards of behavior that have been set forth throughout this policy handbook. Infractions for which demerits will be given:

Excessive talking/disrupting rehearsal

Gum chewing

Sloppy housekeeping (i.e., unwillingness to properly store instrument and music)

Lack of cooperation/unwillingness to follow instructions

Disrespect shown to teachers/peers

Lack of effort with respect to music preparation of musical/marching improvement

Consequences

Verbal warning.

Student receives a zero for the day's participation grade.

Dismissal from band for the rest of the day and conference with parents and Principal.

Dismissal from band for one quarter (nine week period).

Severe discipline clause

In the event that a student blatantly and/or maliciously causes a serious classroom disruption, this clause will supersede all other consequences and the student will immediately be taken to the Principal's office, and serve the third offense consequence.

TRAVEL POLICIES

It is the policy of the Pittsburg Board of Education that alcohol, drugs, simulated drugs, tobacco products, and other controlled substances are prohibited at any school function; including trips. Students found in possession of or under the influence of the above items will automatically be turned over to the administration or appropriate authorities for appropriate action. Students are subject to suspension from band and school.

A travel itinerary and procedures list will be issued for each trip. It is important that these instructions be followed so the orchestra can move quickly and efficiently. Please note: **Students will not be allowed to travel with the orchestra without a current medical release form. It should be noted that proper behavior is expected when on a school sponsored trip. Undignified conduct or reckless behavior may result in disciplinary suspension from school and dismissal from the ensemble. (See the Student and Parent Handbook; pages B-2 and B-3)**

Trip Reminders

- Students are responsible for their own instruments, uniforms, luggage, and equipment.
- Students are not allowed to bring guests or pets.
- Trip sponsors are to be obeyed and respected.
- Busses should be kept clean by the students. Always place trash in the bags or containers provided.
- Students are responsible for knowing departure times and should be ready on time. Check the trip itinerary!
- All students must travel to and from performances on busses, not in personal cars. Any students who need to return from a performance with his/her parent(s)/guardian(s) should submit a signed permission slip to the director and have visual verification with parent(s)/guardian(s) before departure.
- Conduct of the students in public eating places or motels should be subdued and courteous.
- While staying in a hotel, students should be considerate of all other occupants, especially at night. Rooms should be left neat and hotel property should not be removed or damaged.
- Students may not leave their rooms after curfew and room check.
- Students may not visit rooms occupied by members of the opposite sex. If an emergency situation arises an adult sponsor will accompany students to or in a room.

GRADING

PITTSBURG GRADING POLICIES PER QUARTER

Performances:

| | |
|--------------------------|-----------------|
| Concerts | 50 points each |
| Festivals/Contests | 50 points each |
| Special/Extra Rehearsals | 20 points each |
| Etc. | TBA points each |

Musicianship Skills:

| | |
|---------------|-----------------|
| Scale Tests | 20 points each |
| Memory Tests | 20 points each |
| Rhythm Tests | TBA points each |
| Playing Tests | 20 points each |

Quizzes:

| | |
|-------------|-----------------|
| Enharmonics | 20 points each |
| Terms | TBA points each |

Attendance:

| | |
|-----------------|--------------|
| Scheduled Class | 5 points/day |
|-----------------|--------------|

Cooperation/Attitude:

TBA points

The first quarter test will be a memory test over scales and music. The second quarter test will be a playing test over concert music/scales learned so far. Music may be used for the second quarter test; scales will be played from memory. In addition, this will determine the seat order for each section for third quarter. The third quarter and fourth tests will be both written and playing.

TOTAL POINTS EARNED DIVIDED BY TOTAL POINTS POSSIBLE = GRADE

ORCHESTRA LETTER AWARD POLICY

Because the Pittsburg Orchestra Program is a significant representative of the school and community, and because of the academic, creative, and performance excellence displayed by its members, the school administration has deemed it worthy of earning a school letter. In order to qualify for an Orchestra Letter Award, points must be earned in the following categories. A required point total will be given in February and conclude on the final day of school, to determine students who earned an Orchestra Letter Award.

FULL ATTENDANCE TO **ALL** PERFORMANCES
DISTRICT ORCHESTRA AUDITIONS
STATE ORCHESTRA AUDITIONS
DISTRICT CONTEST SOLO/ENSEMBLE
STATE CONTEST SOLO/ENSEMBLE
JAZZ BAND, BAND, OR CHOIR (IN ADDITION TO TAKING ORCHESTRA)
TAKE PRIVATE LESSONS (Director approved)
GIVE PRIVATE LESSONS (Director approved)
PIT ORCHESTRA FOR MUSICAL

Additional Requirements

- Students must be enrolled for two consecutive semesters (Fall and Spring).
- Students must maintain a B average or better from each semester in orchestra.
- Students who earn a chair in the All-State Orchestra will automatically letter.
- ANY UNEXCUSED ABSENCE FROM A PERFORMANCE AUTOMATICALLY DISQUALIFIES THE STUDENT FROM LETTER CONSIDERATION.
- Here are some factors other than musicianship that have a great bearing on a student's participation and lettering in orchestra:

| | | |
|--------------|-------------|---------------|
| OBEDIENCE | CLEANLINESS | COURTESY |
| HONESTY | ALERTNESS | EFFORT |
| SELF-CONTROL | ATTITUDE | DEPENDABILITY |
| INITIATIVE | PRIDE | RESPECT |

Performances

A schedule of additional 2007-2008 performances will come to you as they develop. Please reserve all of those dates at that time. Also, consider any additional schedule as part of the handbook itself. **THIS SCHEDULE IS SUBJECT TO IMMEDIATE CHANGE.**

2007-2008 Orchestra Schedule

PITTSBURG HIGH SCHOOL ORCHESTRA TENTATIVE FALL SCHEDULE

| <u>Day</u> | <u>Date</u> | <u>Event</u> | <u>Location</u> | <u>Time</u> |
|------------|--------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------|-------------|
| Sat | Nov 3 | Mass Orch/District Orch Auditions | Chanute | TBA |
| Sat | Dec 1 | District Orchestra | Altamont | TBA |
| M | Dec 3 | Orchestra Concert | PHS | 7pm |
| Sat | Jan 5 | State Orch Auditions | Salina | TBA |
| TFS | Feb 28-Mar 1 | KMEA | Wichita | TBA |
| Sat | Apr 12 | District Solo and Ensemble | PSU | TBA |
| Th | Apr 17 | State Large Group | PHS | TBA |
| S | Apr 26 | State Solo and Ensemble | Andover | TBA |
| S | May 3 | Proposed Orch Trip | Kansas City | TBA |
| Tu | May 13 | Orchestra Concert | PHS | 7pm |
| Sun | May 18 | Graduation | PSU Weede Gym | 1pm |

Tentative schedule as of 08/17/07 RE

Pittsburg High School Orchestra

Challenge Form

DATE _____

CHALLENGER _____ PART (1ST, ETC.) _____

CHALLENGEE _____ PART (1ST, ETC.) _____

FOR CHAIR POSITION (#) _____ IN THE _____ SECTION.

MUSIC TO BE USED IN THE CHALLENGE AND MEASURES TO BE PLAYED:

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____

TIME _____

SIGNATURES:

CHALLENGER _____

CHALLENGEE _____

DIRECTOR _____

Results

CHALLENGER ERRORS _____

CHALLENGEE ERRORS _____

DATE _____

DIRECTOR SIGNATURE _____

PITTSBURG ORCHESTRA INSTRUMENT CARE AGREEMENT

STUDENT NAME _____ PHONE _____

STUDENT ADDRESS _____

INSTRUMENT _____ SCHOOL YEAR _____

MAKE _____

MODEL _____

SERIAL NUMBER _____

CURRENT VALUE OF INSTRUMENT _____

LIST CURRENT DAMAGES HERE:

I accept responsibility of the instrument listed above for the above school year. I know any damages that occur beyond normal wear and use may be charged to me. I agree to the policies set in this handbook with regard to care and maintenance of the above instrument.

STUDENT SIGNATURE _____

PARENT/GUARDIAN SIGNATURE _____

DIRECTOR SIGNATURE _____

Student Health Registration

Student name _____ M____ F_____

Address _____ Date of birth _____

Height _____ Weight _____ Phone () -

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) name _____

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) address _____

Describe the following: (use back page if necessary)

Recent illness _____

Chronic or long-term illness _____

Allergies _____

Medicines currently being taken _____

Other medical or physical restrictions:

Family Physician _____ Phone () -

Parent or Guardian Consent Statement

I grant permission for the above named person to be treated and/or hospitalized by a licensed physician of an emergency situation arises.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Work phone: _____ Home phone: _____

Acknowledgment Form

As a member of the Pittsburg Orchestra Program, I have read and agree to comply with all policies set in the Pittsburg Orchestra Handbook. I acknowledge that I have received and read the 2007-2008 Pittsburg Orchestra Handbook.

Parent/Guardian

Date

Student

Date

This form and the Student Health Registration are due August 31, 2007.