

**John F. Kennedy High School
Bellmore, NY
Orchestra Handbook
2021-2022**



Emily Kenyon, Director of Orchestras

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<https://kennedyorchestra.weebly.com/>

Prelude: Welcome Letter

Dear Orchestra Students and Parents,

Welcome to the Orchestra Program at John F. Kennedy High School! I am thrilled to be working with you, and am looking forward to a memorable year of music-making.

The purpose of this handbook is to inform music students and their parents of the program's requirements, expectations, and to provide consistency among the performing organizations in the JFK HS Music Department. The degree of success within an organization depends upon the development of standards and procedures.

The handbook and its contents are meant to serve as a guide through which the procedures, expectations, and obligations of our performing ensembles may be realized. It is anticipated that with the use of this handbook, students and parents/guardians will become more cognizant of our mutual goals. We sincerely hope that the music education experience gained through participation in our departmental performing groups will be of lasting value.

Gerard J. Owenburg
Principal

Emily Kenyon
Director of Orchestras

2021-2022 Orchestra Handbook

1. Course Descriptions:

Freshman Orchestra (1 credit): This entry-level group is made up of all 9th graders entering the HS orchestra program. Students work on a variety of repertoire as well as the skills of intonation, tone production, rhythm, technique, and interpretation.

Prerequisites: *Participation in middle school orchestra or audition with director.*

Advanced Orchestra (1 credit): All orchestra students in grades 10-12 are automatically placed into the Advanced Orchestra. Students in Advanced Orchestra work on advanced repertoire and occasionally combine with Wind Ensemble personnel to form a full orchestra. **Prerequisites:** *Participation in Freshman Orchestra or audition with the director.*

2. Materials:

- Sharpened pencil with eraser
- Rosin
- Cleaning cloth/rag for wiping down strings
- On your device: metronome and tuning apps (can easily find many free options in the app store or online)

3. Concert Attire

Orchestra ladies: Solid black top and bottom (dress pants, skirt, jumpsuit, or dress), black dress shoes. Skirts and dresses must fall below the knee when sitting down. All tops must have sleeves (no spaghetti straps).

Orchestra gentlemen: Black dress shirt, black tie, black dress pants, belt, black socks, and black dress shoes.

*Failure to comply with the dress code will result in a zero performance grade and the student will not be allowed to perform on stage. If you have any questions about the dress code, please ask Ms. Kenyon ASAP.

4. Grading

30%- Performances

30%- Sectionals

20%- Class Work

20%- Playing Exam(s)

Breakdown of each category...

Performances (30%)

Attendance is required of all music students at scheduled school concerts & performances. An unexcused absence from a winter or spring concert will result in a grade of zero on the student's performance average.

In the event of a student's anticipated absence from a required performance, parents must notify Ms. Kenyon at 992-1441 immediately. Absence from a required performance will be excused for the following reasons only:

1. Severe sickness- corroborated with a note from the family doctor or urgent care
2. Severe sickness or a death in the family
3. A sudden emergency (car accident, severe sports injury, etc...)

There will be an assignment to replace the student's participation in the performance.

A list of performance dates will be issued at the beginning of the school year to each music student along with a performance commitment contract to be signed by the students and their parents/guardians.

Sectionals (30%)

As per board of education policy, the music department schedules sectional lessons on a rotational basis. The rotation schedule was established to provide for the release of a music student from his/her academic class for additional music instruction. Skills covered in sectionals include warm-ups, technical studies, sight-reading, performance literature, and chamber music.

Each student will have a sectional approximately once every 9 days, and will only miss the same class period once or twice per marking period due to the rotating lesson

periods.

Sectionals are required, and must be made up if they are missed. Students will be required to make up any sectionals missed by their next sectional. Students that turn in a lesson make-up late will not receive full credit for the sectional, regardless of excuse (unless they are legally still absent from school or have made a prior arrangement with Ms. Kenyon.)

Students may be excused from sectionals ONLY under the following conditions:

1. They have a full period unit exam in their subject classes
2. They are reviewing for a full period exam to be given the next day
3. They are scheduled for a lab period
4. They have a group presentation
5. They are legally absent from school.
6. They have a quiz that takes longer than 15 minutes.

Make Up Procedures:

Students are required to make up their missed sectional to receive credit. In the sectional schedule, students will be offered one day at the end of each cycle for make-ups during the same period their rotation was scheduled. If students still cannot make up their missed sectional during this time, please see Ms. Kenyon. It is the student's responsibility to find out from either their teacher or section leader what was covered during the sectional.

Classroom Work:

Students are responsible for making up any work they miss in their academic class, and are to figure out in advance how they will get the material that was missed. Therefore, there is no need for the students to go to class before coming to sectionals. The student must, however, get any due homework to his or her teacher on time and may not use sectionals as an excuse not to hand in homework.

Sectionals may not be used as an excuse for missing any assignment given by the regularly scheduled teacher.

*Note: On occasion, some students may have difficulty with a certain class. Please see Ms. Kenyon **before** the sectional to see if another arrangement can be worked out.

Class Work (20%)

The success of a performing ensemble is a reflection of the work that is accomplished in rehearsals. In order to receive a perfect participation grade, students must do the following:

- Try their very best at all times and actively participate in class! Orchestra is a

team effort, and its success depends on the effort of every single student. A refusal to play or contribute to class will result in a zero participation grade for the day.

- Be kind and respectful towards their peers and instructor
- Be in their seat, unpacked, and ready to work 2 minutes after the late bell
- Have their instrument, folder, and a **pencil** at every rehearsal.
- Have NO gum, food, or candy in the classroom.
- Do not use cellphones or any other electronic device (unless it is for purposes of tuning)

Playing Exams (20%)

Students will be given 1-2 short playing exams per marking period. Each exam will focus on technical studies, exercises, and repertoire excerpts. Students will have the option of completing each exam as a video submission or in person with Ms. Kenyon.

5. The Use of Instruments and Maintenance

Instruments must be kept clean and put away in their proper storage areas at all times. For the protection and care of all music department equipment, please adhere to the following guideline:

- Each student will be assigned a specific location to store his/her instrument and will be expected to keep their instruments in the assigned location when not in use.
- In accordance with district policy, students assigned school instruments will pay a **\$90** maintenance fee in the fall. Students will then be responsible for their proper care and maintenance. If damage occurs due to student neglect or negligence, it is expected that the parents/guardians of the student will assume full financial responsibility for repairs or replacement of the instrument in question.

6. The Use of Music

Each student will be responsible for the music they are given. Students will be assigned a folder with a storage bin number for orchestra music. It is the responsibility of the student to take proper care of the folder. Original music can go home unless it returns in disarray. (Students should keep their music with their instrument where possible to avoid congestion in the folder cabinet). Students are expected to place all music given to them **neatly** in their folder.

When music is to be marked, the students should only use a **pencil**. Any music that is marked or defaced in another manner will have to be replaced by the student. As of 2013, the standard rate per part is \$3.00 plus shipping.

If a student wishes, they may make a photocopied set for practicing at home. Students will also have electronic access to their music on Google Classroom.

If a music folder is taken from the orchestra room, it is imperative that the folders are brought back to class each day, so that the students are able to perform during rehearsals and earn their daily participation points. If you want an extra folder to keep @ home, please see Ms. K.

7. Excessive Absences

From time to time and due to many different circumstances, students may find themselves absent from school for an extended period of time. If your child falls into a category of five or more absences per quarter, Ms. Kenyon has extra assignments that the student can complete in a timely fashion to make up the maximum allowed number of classes in a quarter (3). Please see Ms. Kenyon **before** the end of the marking quarter to stay on top of these. In addition, please note that tardy's/lateness to class also can count towards an absence from a class. (3 unexcused lateness= one class abs.) Remember, it is *your* responsibility to make sure you are maintaining your seat time- not Ms. Kenyon's.

8. Practicing

In any academic subject with rigorous demands, students are required to practice the skills they have learned in class in order to hone their potential. When a musician practices, they are reinforcing all of the materials that have been taught. Students are expected to take their instrument home 2 nights per week and on the weekends. Students may also make use of the school practice rooms during any free time.

9. Orchestra Seating Policy

Throughout each concert cycle, students will rotate seats on a weekly basis. It is expected that students assume leadership responsibilities regardless of where they sit in the orchestra, and it is beneficial that they experience playing in the ensemble from multiple perspectives.

As we approach each concert, seating auditions will be held for any students interested in leadership roles (principal players, front stands, soloists). Recognizing the fact that not all students are interested in competition, all other students will be seated at the

discretion of the director based on what will best suit the ensemble.

10. Disciplinary Procedure

Please refer to the [Student Handbook](#) for all policies related to attendance, code of conduct, and student expectations

- Cell Phones and other Electronic Devices: 1st offense to be picked up at the end of the day. 2nd and all other offenses (whether checking the time or anything else), the phone will go to your assistant principal. Students will *not* receive credit for their participation in class if they are seen using a cell phone during instructional time.

11. Fundraising

Throughout the year, various fundraising events will be held for a number of functions, including trips. Each student's individual account will be recorded and if there is a balance at the year's end, it will be carried over to the following year. Profits will carry over while the student is in school. If the student drops the course or graduates, they will be automatically put into the General Orchestra Fund.

13. Extra Help

Ms. Kenyon will be available for after-school extra help in the orchestra room once a week for 70 minutes. Extra help day TBD.

14. Additional Playing Opportunities (outside of school)

- [Metropolitan Youth Orchestra](#)
- [Gemini Youth Orchestra](#)
- [Long Island Youth Orchestra](#)
- [Nassau Suffolk Performing Arts](#)

15. Contact Information

Emily Kenyon, Director of Orchestras at John F. Kennedy High School

Email: ekenyon@bmchsd.org

Phone: 516-992-1441

Remind (for student use):

Kennedy Advanced Orchestra: text @mskorch to the number 81010

Kennedy Freshman Orchestra: text @mskorch9 to the number 81010

Website: <https://kennedyorchestra.weebly.com/>

Instagram: @jfkhs_orchestras

Parents: E-mail is the fastest way for me to reply to any question you may have. Phone calls are always welcomed, but please be aware that due to my rotating and traveling schedule, I am often not available at a set time.

*I will be using Infinite Campus for parent email blasts, so please be sure your email is listed to receive information.

Students: You may either use email or Remind to get in touch with me directly. I will be contacting the class via Remind for all important notifications (i.e. a concert is cancelled; a change in location, or any last minute information you should need to know).