



Union Grove Middle School

Sam Lowder

Orchestra Director

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Union Grove Middle School Orchestra Handbook

Welcome to the 2024-2025 Union Grove Middle School Orchestra Program! Ours is an exceptional Orchestra Program which provides a fun and challenging experience aiming to make each of us better musicians and better people! Our success will come from collaboration, communication, responsibility, dedication, and determination. We will exemplify a Will to Win by giving M.O.R.E. and continuing to go Above and Beyond. This is the Wolverine Way! *You BELONG here!* I am honored to be your teacher!

Sincerely,

Sam Lowder

Communication

I will send information via Infinite Campus emails, *REMIND* texts, or by phone, or in person. **Please be sure your contact information (email addresses/phone numbers) is current in your Infinite Campus account settings.** If you ever have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me (please include your child's name when emailing me or leaving a message.)

To receive UGMS Orchestra *REMIND* texts, please text the appropriate code to 81010:

For 6th Grade: @ug6orc For 7th Grade: @ug7orc For 8th Grade: @ug8orc

Course Information

Orchestra is a sequential program with classes beginning as early as sixth grade and continuing through high school graduation. It is a yearlong, performance-based class designed for students interested in learning to play the violin, viola, cello, or bass *with the director's approval.*

Concentrations are in skill development and refinement through creating, performing, responding, and connecting using music literature, exercises, etudes, and technical studies appropriate to the needs and abilities of the student. Growth and achievement are assessed in large group ensembles, small groups, and individually. There are many learning and performance opportunities inside and outside-of-class. Students may also receive ratings for some performances by adjudicators.

Concert Attendance Policy

Orchestra students are *required* to attend and participate in the concerts. If there is a date conflict with an athletic practice, a club meeting, a birthday, etc., the students are expected to attend the concert instead. If there is a conflict with an athletic game/tournament or if there is a religious event/reason, students may be excused from the concert, but will need to submit a make-up assignment. Unexcused absences may result in the student receiving a zero (0%) assessment grade.

Orchestra Rules

1. Be on time and prepared.
2. Be attentive and participate.
3. Be respectful of all people, instruments, and equipment.

Fingernail Length Requirement

To play a string instrument properly, fingernails need to be kept short enough that they do not extend past the tips of the fingers. Sculpted/acrylic/press-on nails are detrimental to correctly playing a string instrument.

Grading and Conduct

Grades are based on the teacher-evaluation of each student's participation in class and at concerts. Students should demonstrate ongoing improvement in performances and on written assessments.

40% Practice Work (Daily Participation and Home Practice/Study)

Students will earn weekly practice work grades through being present (prepared), purposeful (participating with appropriate behavior) and powerful (by doing their best.) Home practice is also vital to a student's improvement and success and should be at least 100 minutes per week. Practice work grades may also come from written or performance reflections or quizzes.

40% Assessments and Certain Concerts

Class assessments may be written or performance-based. Concerts may be graded as assessments/exams. Concert credit requires reporting on time (in concert attire) and remaining for the entire event.

20% Semester/Final Exam and Certain Concerts

Orchestra semester or final exams may be written and/or performance-based.

Satisfactory-S conduct is expected or will be graded as Needs Improvement-N or Unsatisfactory-U.

Supplies

A Binder (1½" or smaller) for music, Pencil(s), Concert Uniform, and an Instrument

The concert uniform is the UGMS Fine Arts polo, black pants, black socks, and black shoes.

The Fine Arts polo may *only* be purchased through the UGMS My School Bucks account for **\$33.00**. The link for the MySchoolBucks Fine Arts polo order form will be sent as soon as it becomes available.

The instrument and bow should be of high quality and include a case, rosin, and cleaning cloth. Violins and violas will also need a shoulder rest while cellos and basses will also need a rock stop. Brochures from local music stores which rent and sell quality instruments will be provided soon. There will be a Parent Meeting/Instrument Rental Night on Monday, August 12th at 6:00pm in the Commons - New orchestra students/parents should be present (but anyone interested may also attend.)

The average monthly rental cost is around \$35 for violins/violas, \$55 for cellos, & \$75 for basses. For those unable to rent/buy a personal instrument, some school instruments are available for use. A \$50 per year (\$25 per semester) maintenance fee is requested to use a school-owned instrument. For any student using a school-owned instrument, any replacement/repair costs due to theft, loss, or damage occurring to the instrument, bow, case, and/or its accessories while in the care of the student, at or away from school, is the responsibility of the parent or guardian. Misconduct in class, mishandling, or damaging any school instrument may forfeit a student's privilege to use it and may result in behavior consequences as well as possible removal from the Orchestra class.

Mr. Lowder will provide all rehearsal and performance music. Occasionally, a Chromebook and earbuds or headphones may be needed for Orchestra class. If so, sufficient notice will be provided.

Instrument Drop Off and Pick-Up

All violin and viola students will need to bring their instruments to school daily. Instruments are to be dropped off in the Orchestra room prior to homeroom. Instruments may be picked-up at the end of the day, prior to afternoon dismissal. Cello and bass students are NOT required to bring their instruments to class but should bring them for finger taping, to rehearsals/concerts, and for tuning, as needed.

Fundraising and Donations

Some expenses the Orchestra faces each year are not covered by the school; examples include performance evaluation fees, transportation expenses, field trip costs, music, equipment, instruments, accompaniment costs, recording fees, facility use expenses, and costly repairs. To help offset these expenses, the Orchestra will hold one Cookie Dough Fundraiser in the fall. An alternative way to help provide funding is through a voluntary donation to the UGMS Orchestra.

Additional Opportunities

Orchestra students are encouraged to participate in additional music opportunities occurring outside of class. Private lessons, youth orchestras, auditioning for All-State, Solo and Ensemble Performance Evaluation, church or community orchestras, and Summer Orchestra Camps are some examples of such opportunities. Some of these may require an additional cost or fee.

Union Grove Middle School Orchestra Calendar 2024-2025*

Monday, August 12	6th Grade* Parent Meeting & Instrument Rental Night at 6:30pm – Commons *Also, for any NEW UGMS 7th or 8th Grade Orchestra students/parents
Monday, August 19	UGMS Fine Arts polo order/payment (\$33) deadline using MySchoolBucks Returning students, please <i>make sure your Fine Arts polo still fits</i> - order a new one, if needed!
Wednesday, October 9	6th Grade Orchestra After-School Rehearsal and Fall “Dessert” Concert Students remain after school at dismissal; Concert in the Commons at 6:30pm
Monday, October 14	7th & 8th Grade Orchestra After-School Rehearsal and Fall Concert 7 th Remain at dismissal/8 th Return at 6:00pm; Concert in the Commons at 6:30pm
Monday, December 9	6th Grade Orchestra After-School Rehearsal and Winter Concert Students remain after school at dismissal; Concert in the Commons at 6:30pm
Thursday, December 12	7th & 8th Grade Orchestras & UGHS Orchestras “Candy Canes & Carols” Arrive by 6:00pm/Concert starts at 6:30pm – Bethany Baptist Church
Monday, February 10	7th & 8th Grade Orchestras & UGHS Orchestras Pre-LGPE Concert Arrive by 6:00pm/Concert starts at 6:30pm – Union Grove High School Gym
Wednesday, March 5	6th Grade Orchestra After-School Rehearsal and Term 3 Concert Students remain after school at dismissal; Concert in the Commons at 6:30pm
Monday, March 10	7th & 8th Grade Orchestras GMEA Large Group Performance Evaluation Times TBD (during the school day) at First Baptist Church in Jonesboro, GA
Tuesday, May 6 (or TBA)	6th Grade Fine Arts Recruitment Performance for 5th Grade Students/Spring Concert Times TBD in the UGMS Gym; BAND, CHORUS, and ORCHESTRA will perform!
Thursday, May 8	7th & 8th Grade Orchestra After-School Rehearsal-Spring Concert/Comp I Art Show* 7 th Remain at dismissal/8 th Return at 6:00pm; Concert in the Gym at 6:30pm/*Commons

Additional Orchestra Opportunities and Events

Thursday, August 29	Fine Arts Fall Cookie Dough Fundraiser Kick Off (During Connections) Every Orchestra Family’s participation is encouraged and appreciated! Orders/\$ due 9/9
Wednesday, October 16	Orchestra Individual and Composite Picture Day (During Connections) All Orchestra students will need to wear their UGMS Fine Arts polo for the picture
Saturday, October 19	GMEA District VI Orchestra All-State Auditions at Flat Rock Middle School Open to interested/serious 8th Grade students (additional fee and practice required)
Saturday, November 9	GMEA Orchestra Solo & Ensemble – Times TBD at Ola High School Open to interested/serious 8th Grade students (additional fee and practice required)
Friday-Saturday, February 7-8	All-County Orchestra (MS&HS) – Times TBD at the Fairview Performing Arts Center Open to teacher-nominated 7th and 8th Grade students (additional fee required)
Tuesday-Friday, February 11-14	UGMS 8th Grade Fine Arts Trip: Walt Disney World-Orlando – More info is coming soon! Open to interested 8th Grade Fine Arts students/parents (additional fee required)
Saturday, April 19	GMEA District VI Orchestra Honor Clinic – Times TBD at Booth Middle School Open to teacher-nominated 6th Grade students (additional fee required)

**I will do my best to adhere to this calendar OR I will attempt to provide sufficient notice of any changes.*

Parents, please use this link (<https://bit.ly/ugmsohandbook>) or the QR code → to complete the Handbook Agreement Form by Friday, August 16, 2024.

If you ever have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Email (slowder@henry.k12.ga.us) to receive the quickest reply!

I am looking forward to a fantastic year!!

