



South Pasadena Middle School Tiger Cub Orchestra Handbook 2020-2021

Dear Orchestra Students and Parents,

Welcome to our SPMS Orchestra! My name is Ashley Diggs and I am the SPMS Orchestra Director. I hope everyone is ready for a busy, exciting, and fun-filled year of making wonderful music!

The purpose of this handbook is to inform you of expectations and policies of our school orchestra as well as assist you in having a successful year in the orchestra program. You will find the rules and regulations of the program that each student will be expected to follow. I will also be sending more information to students and parents regarding updates and/or changes throughout the school year.

To ensure a successful year, communication is key! If you or your student ever need to schedule a zoom appointment or help with their instrument, email is the best way to reach me and I will be happy to meet with you after 2:00pm. Also, please join our Remind class listed below for even more efficient communication.

Thank you,

Ashley Diggs
SPMS Orchestra Director
adiggs@spusd.net

Remind App
MWF class code: @orch100
TTH class code: @orch200

Class Expectations

Even though we are all scattered it is important to remember that we are in class. All students are expected to follow the SPMS behavior policy, the SPUSD “Netiquette” procedures sent to all families, and the following class expectations:

- Join our class ON TIME. Our class time is **7:40-8:20am**. We have very short class sessions so it is important that we do not waste time!
- Cameras are **REQUIRED** to be turned on during class!
- Come to class prepared. Have your required materials ready before the start of class. (Instrument, music, pencil)
- No phones during our class sessions.
- No doing other classwork during our orchestra class.
- Be respectful during large group and small group sessions.
- Use good instrument position and posture.

Materials Needed For Orchestra

- Instrument and Instrument Accessories (shoulder rest, rock stop, rosin)
- Extra set of strings (if possible)
- Music Stand
- Chair with **NO ARMS**
- Assigned Music
- Pencil
- Tuner (Physical or App)
- Metronome (Physical or App)

Designated Orchestra Space

0 period orchestra is early and students will be asked to play their instruments during our class time. I realize everyone’s living situations are very different, so please discuss with your family a designated quiet place for students to play without distractions and hopefully not disturb others. If there are any noise restrictions or concerns for your home, please email me directly to discuss different options.

Classwork

Our 0 period orchestra is an academic class, and student work is graded. The students will be assigned and assessed in the following areas:

Practice Journals

- All students are required to practice in order to be successful in our orchestra program. Students will be required to fill out practice journals designed for a more efficient and thoughtful practice session. Students should strive to be practicing 30 minutes or more in each practice session, however the most important part of their practice journals is the thought behind their practicing. Students will be required to write what they practiced as well as their goals for their practice sessions. This will not only help them reflect on their practice, but also help them have a more focused practice session.

Written and Playing Assignments

- Students will be assigned various to assess knowledge of theory and critical music listening skills. All class assignments will be posted in Google Classroom. Assignments must be turned in on time. If there is difficulty submitting assignments please let me know so I may help you and/or give alternatives.

Quizzes and Playing Tests

- Throughout the year, students will be given quizzes to check for understanding of music theory and concepts. These will usually be done during our scheduled class time.
- Students will also be assessed on their knowledge of scales as well as their knowledge of our current orchestra music in the form of playing tests. All submissions will be through Google Classroom unless otherwise specified. If for any reason you are not able to submit a test, it is YOUR responsibility to let Mrs. Diggs know before the deadline to get assistance.

Distance Learning Performances

- In our distance learning environment, we will still have virtual ensembles. Students will be asked to submit recordings of their parts for selected pieces in both chamber groups and our class ensemble. Because this takes a tremendous amount of editing, students who do not submit performance videos on time will miss our “performance” and will get a 0. If students cannot participate for any reason, please let me know BEFORE the deadline to get a make-up assignment.

Supporting Your Student

Practicing: The best way to help your student improve on their instrument is by encouraging them to practice! All good habits are learned and need to be encouraged as often as possible. Dedicating uninterrupted practice time to learning and improving on an instrument teaches students commitment, hard work, and perseverance. Also, keep in mind how they practice is more important than how long they practice!

Google Classroom: I will be posting assignments and announcements for students primarily on Google Classroom. I will be in communication with parents if there are concerns about classwork, however it is helpful to check in and take a peek at their Google Classroom. If you would like to be invited to our class and have access to view assignments, please fill out the Google Form for “Google Classroom Invites” that will be sent out to all families.

School Instruments

Students are encouraged to use their own instruments as much as possible. If you do not own a personal instrument and need to check out a school instrument, please fill out the Instrument Check-Out Google Form emailed to all parents and students and posted in our Google Classroom.

Donating to Our Orchestra

South Pasadena parents have always been very generous and supportive of our SPMS orchestra program. Donations allow our program to continue to flourish and grow. Even in a distance learning environment, our classroom has very specific needs. Donations will assist with the following in our distance learning classroom:

- Sheet Music and Method Books
- School Instruments and Instrument repair
- Strings for All Instruments (Violin, Viola, Cello, Bass)
- Digital Music Learning Programs and technology for our specific class

We understand that these are difficult times and not everyone can make a monetary donation at this time. We typically request \$100 from every family, however no donation is too small or large. If you are able and willing to donate to our program please visit our SPMS Music Boosters website to make a digital donation.

<https://www.spmusicboosters.net>

If your employer has a matching gift program, please don't forget to let them know about your donation! Some companies will double or even triple your gifts to non-profit organizations like the SPMS Music Boosters. If your work for such an employer please take advantage of that amazing opportunity to multiply your support for our young musicians!

I am looking forward to working with you and your students this school year. While these are less than ideal circumstances for making music together, it is my intention to make the best of it and foster the best possible environment for our string players. Thank you in advance for all your support!