

River Trail Middle School

-Orchestra-

Frequently Asked Questions – Online Learning 2020

Universal Remote Learning in Orchestra

Microsoft Teams will continue to be the main starting point for all classroom assignments and activities as we transition through the difference phases of school reopening. Music, handouts, and other class information will be in the Files tab under “Class Meetings.”

The current quality of “Live” video streaming is making it challenging to provide accurate feedback for student performance. While there will be times in orchestra where students will play for me “Live,” most of performance feedback given to students will be done using FlipGrid.

Digital Assignment Due Dates

I have been using various types of technology as part of teaching orchestra for the past several years. Over the years, I have learned that technology geared for classrooms were not designed to handle class sizes of 50 or more. When comes to planning digital assignments or tests, I always expect to have handful of students who will have some technology related issue.

Most of our digital assignments will initially have a “target due date.” That date is set for students to have their assignments turned in but allow extra time for students who are having technology issues. Deadlines after the target due date for students having technology issues are handled on a case by case circumstance.

Orchestra Concerts

Normally, all orchestra students will have at least 3 mandatory orchestra concerts during the school year: winter concert, district performance evaluation, and spring concert. This year we are changing how we approach some of our concerts to ensure the safety of students and maintain social distancing guidelines.

- **Winter Concert** this year will change to different type of format and presentation.
- **District Performance Evaluation** is the concert event held outside of River Trail MS where each orchestra group’s performance is graded by 3 judges. Organizers of the event have not released specific dates and locations at this time.
- **Spring Concert** is tentatively scheduled for the evening of May 18, 2021. We are hoping that circumstances have significantly improved, and our Spring Concert will be a LIVE performance event at River Trail MS!

Information and Handouts

Important Information and Handouts for parents will be located on the RTMS Orchestra website.

rtmsorchestra.com/information

Where can I get this Orchestra related item?

Parents will need to get various Orchestra related materials for their child including the Essential Elements Book for Strings. Below are links to local area music stores in the North Fulton and North Gwinnett area, and links to online vendors that specialize in string instruments.

[Link to Local Area Music Stores](#)

[Link to Online String Instrument Vendors](#)

What can I do to support my child in orchestra?

1. Make sure your contact information on Infinite Campus, especially email, is correct and current.
2. Ask your child to play something for you on his/her instrument. We want to develop a child's comfort and willingness to perform in front of others regardless if it may sound good or bad.
3. Talk about music! Music is everywhere most notably in movies. Hearing an orchestra play in the background of a dramatic moment in a movie is a great way to discuss how music can have an impact in a movie scene.
4. If you forgot, make sure your contact information on Infinite Campus, especially email, is correct and current.

How does my child get into Chamber Orchestra?

The RTMS Chamber Orchestra is the advanced orchestra group made up of 7th and 8th grade students by audition. Auditions are held around March or April for acceptance into the Chamber Orchestra the following school year. Students who want to audition for the Chamber Orchestra must show dedication in their current orchestra which include attending all required rehearsals and concerts, coming to rehearsals and class with their music practiced, and having a positive attitude in class and with their orchestra peers.

Students will prepare a scale and 2 excerpts given two weeks prior to auditions and will be graded on several performance standards. Student scores are ranked, and acceptance is based on the student's proficiency score and the numbers of each instrument to maintain a realistic balance of instruments among the section.

[Click here for an example of the Chamber Orchestra Scoring Rubric](#)

What is All-State?

Georgia All-State is a special event organized by the **Georgia Music Educators Association (GMEA)** and allows high caliber students from all over the state to work together with nationally renowned conductors in music education. The 3-day event is held in Athens, Georgia, from April 15-17, 2021. Students must undergo two separate performance-based auditions.

The first audition is held at the district level and students must pass with a minimum score of 55 out of 80 to proceed to the second round. In the second-round audition, middle school orchestra students are competing against other middle school students at the state level. Students are ranked based on their second-round audition performance scores which determines their selection into the Georgia All-State Orchestra.

Most students who plan to audition for Georgia All-State should have a private lesson teacher as the music requirements go beyond the scope of 6th and 7th Grade Orchestra standards. It is up for the private lesson teacher to determine if a student should audition for Georgia All-State.

[Click here for the RTMS Orchestra, 2020 All-State Registration Form](#)

You may find more information and music requirements about Georgia All-State at this link:

<https://www.gmea.org/aso-information>