

NEW TRIER HIGH SCHOOL ORCHESTRA GRADING POLICY

"It is the philosophy of the Music Department that grades should reflect the effort, ability, attitude and visible dedication that each student demonstrates on a consistent daily basis in a particular ensemble."

A positive attitude is the underlying ingredient *necessary* to the success of each ensemble and in turn each member of that ensemble. In reading the New Trier High School Music Department Grading Policy, one finds principles that serve as benchmarks for a positive attitude. One must leave one's "ego at the door and become a team player" approaching "all new music" and ideas "with an open mind, seeing each as an opportunity to learn." An individual "acts as a professional when rehearsing and performing, and does not thrive on complaining or finding fault with the direction or leadership of the ensemble, or the efforts of its members," but rather "employs creative thinking skills to solve problems or voice concerns" with respect and care. We must work together to achieve success together, and what better way is there than through music? In a very real way this process of music making is a metaphor for making our way through life with our fellows.

The orchestra grading policy is based on a 100-point system that includes the following components (**please note, your grade is cumulative over the semester and the final semester grade represents calculations based on the entire semester**):

I. Daily Attendance: Total of 50 points per semester

Absences and tardiness disrupt the learning environment. Students need regular day-to-day attendance and must be punctual to maintain a sense of continuity in their program. Even one absence can affect the success and educational outcome for the individual and the entire class on that day. Music rehearsals are particularly difficult to make-up since the process is so experiential. It is impossible to re-create what the other students experienced the preceding day.

0 absences	= 50 points	8 absences	= 26 points
1 absence	= 47 points	9 absences	= 23 points
2 absences	= 44 points	10 absences	= 20 points
3 absences	= 41 points	11 absences	= 17 points
4 absences	= 38 points	12 absences	= 14 points
5 absences	= 35 points	13 absences	= 11 points
6 absences	= 32 points	14 absences	= 0 points
7 absences	= 29 points	15 absences	= 0 points

Points missed for *unexcused absences* cannot be made up.

Points missed for *excused absences* can be made up. The following options can be used to make-up points:

- a 30 minute tape recording of you practicing your orchestra music
- a *one-page* single-spaced type-written report on a composer whose music we are performing
- a signed program from a concert you attended that either involves the instrument you play or features an orchestra
- a signed program of a concert or recital you performed in, excepting those scheduled or performed by the orchestra class for which you are enrolled
- there are other creative possibilities for which you must receive director approval
- if a student's excused absence is because of involvement in another music event during that excused absence, director approval will exonerate the student from having to make up the points

Three *unexcused tardies* count as **ONE unexcused absence** after which every additional unexcused tardy counts as an unexcused absence!

II. Assignments: Total of 50 points per semester

The number of assignments will vary each semester. Each assignment will receive points for the quality of work. Assignments will be averaged for the entire semester and given a final number (0-50) for the "Assignments" portion of the grade. In most cases, all assignments can be redone or improved upon. The final date for resubmission of a particular assignment is the Friday one week prior to semester exams. The responsibility of making up assignments is that of the student. You will need access to "SmartMusic" or some electronic form in which scales, assignments and auditions may be emailed.

Note to Freshman, Concert and Symphony Orchestras: it is possible that in each Semester, you will have a group project to complete. Failure to complete this group project will result in an automatic **25-point** deduction for the Semester from the "Assignments" portion of the grading policy.

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III. Scales: (Freshman and Concert Orchestra string players only!)

Each semester you will be given a scale assignment to be turned in one week prior to the end of the quarter. The audio recording may contain the following materials: major and minor scales, scales in thirds and arpeggios. Your performance on this recording will play a significant role in determining your grade for the semester and quarter. Your performance on the recording will be evaluated on the following point system and criteria:

90-100	correlating comment would be "above standard"
80-89	correlating comment would be "at or above standard"
70-79	correlating comment would be "at standard"
60-69	correlating comment would be "below standard"
0-59	correlating comment would be "failing this subject"

The final grade in the class for the semester and quarter determined by categories **I**, **II** and **IV** will never be higher than the grade determined by your performance on the scales, scales in thirds and arpeggios of this category, category **III**. Please note, that if you wish to improve your performance grade on a particular submission, you may redo the recording as many times as necessary up to the Friday one week prior to semester exams.

PLEASE NOTE FRESHMAN ORCHESTRA MEMBERS: you will be required to purchase a one-year subscription to "SmartMusic" (the equivalent of a classroom textbook) for the purpose of your scale and excerpt assignments. The cost will appear on your School Fee Bill (**Fall** Fee Bill will be charged \$26.00 for the subscription and the **Spring** Fee Bill will be charged \$26.00 for a "MAC" microphone and \$17.00 for a "PC" microphone). This cost reflects an institutional discount. "SmartMusic" is a one-of-kind practice software and an essential home practice tool for students in orchestra. It will help your student stay motivated, practice more, and progress quickly. Students are able to access the tuner, metronome, and digital recording features of SmartMusic via their website. Additionally your student will be able to access all of the features, including solo repertoire, technical exercises, jazz improvisation, and full ensemble pieces and email their work. Once you have received the Download CD and Information, please follow the links on the New Trier High School Orchestra Web Page.

IV. Concert Performance/Dress Rehearsals:

Students are expected to be at concert performances and dress rehearsals. For each absence from a dress rehearsal or concert performance, the final semester grade will be reduced by one letter. Please refer to the Music Department policies for clarification.

...if the absence is **excused**, points to reverse this reduction may be earned by completing make-up work assigned by the director.

...if the absence is **unexcused**, the grade reduction may not be reversed.

V. Attitude/Conduct/Professionalism:

You are expected to be professional and respectful at all times and to be accountable for your actions. For examples, please refer to the Music Department policies. To that end, if the student's attitude, conduct and professionalism are not appropriate, the following action will be taken:

Incident 1 - warning.

Incident 2 - conference with director.

Incident 3 - conference with director and parents.

Incident 4 - student must drop class. (The Music Department Chair and a representative from the Administrative Team can arbitrate an appeal process).

VI. Grading Scale:

90-100	= A
80-89	= B
70-79	= C
60-69	= D
0-59	= F