

# 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Orchestra – Frequently Asked Questions

January 2017

## *When does the class meet?*

The class meets every day during 0 period, 8:00-8:50am.

## *Do students have to bring their instruments every day?*

Once again, students rent their own instrument from a music store, or borrow one from the district for use at home and for concerts. We have a selection of cellos and basses in the orchestra room, so I try to arrange that cellists and bassists don't have to bring their instrument back and forth from school (unless they want to). Currently all violin and viola players also have an instrument available for them to use at school, so they don't have to bring their instruments either, although some choose to bring their own. This will hopefully be the case next year as well.

## *How is the class graded?*

The grade for the class is made up of Participation (40%), Performance (30%) and Practice and Projects (30%). Participation involves being prepared with instrument, music and pencil, arriving on time, and contributing actively to the class. Performance requires playing at two school concerts during the year. Practice and Projects assesses work such as composition, notation and theory projects, short playing tests and preparing small group work.

## *What music does the orchestra play?*

The orchestra will continue to use the *String Basics* method book, but will mostly play orchestral repertoire composed for string ensembles.

## *What instruments can students play in the orchestra?*

String orchestra music is usually composed for violins, violas, cellos and double basses. Violins are divided evenly into 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> violins. The viola is a beautiful instrument with a deeper tone than the violin. Viola players read alto clef, rather than treble clef, so if your student is looking for an exciting new challenge, the viola could be for them. Students often swap from the cello to the double bass, but the bass is quite different to the cello; its strings are tuned in fourths (not fifths) and there is a different fingering pattern. Occasionally there are opportunities for string players who also play the piano.

## *Where and when does the orchestra play?*

The orchestra plays at two evening concerts at White Hill (these contribute to students' performance grade), and will also enter at least one competitive festival next year, including the Music In The Parks festival at Six Flags in Vallejo. We also have other engagements as they arise – for example, in the past the orchestra has played at the opening of the Yes Foundation art exhibition in Fairfax Library.

## *If you have any questions –*

Please email Mrs Montgomery: [rmontgomery@rossvalleyschools.org](mailto:rmontgomery@rossvalleyschools.org)