Handbook 2026-2027

Gabriella Paul-Nally, Director

Nikol Boyd, Principal
Ron Huggins, Assistant Principal
Rachel Kidd, Assistant Principal
Martha Patorgis, Assistant Principal

Dear Orchestra Parents,

Welcome to the 2026-2027 TRMS Orchestra! I am very happy that you and your child have chosen to participate in this year's program. Playing an instrument encourages creativity, and helps young people learn discipline and focus. Many great skills are gained through the orchestra experience, including self-discipline, a strong work ethic, attention to detail, teamwork, and confidence. I hope each student will take advantage of the many opportunities available through the orchestra program and continue music as a lifelong pursuit.

This handbook serves as your reference for the activities planned for this year. It also includes classroom policies and procedures. Please review the information with your student, sign the final page, and mark your calendar with concert and activity dates.

Parents are encouraged to be involved with the orchestra program. Research points to the importance of supporting children in the positive activities they become a part of. There are many areas that require assistance such as uniforms, chaperoning, and pre-concert assistance. Please consider volunteering and indicate your desire to volunteer on the student information sheet.

Please contact me if you have any questions or concerns about your child's progress in orchestra. It is best to reach me through my school email.

I am so excited to be a part of the Taylor Road family, and I look forward to a wonderful year of music learning and performing!

Musically yours,

Gabriella Paul-Nally

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Purpose

Middle school orchestra is offered to beginning sixth grade students as well as seventh and eighth grade intermediate and advanced students. The purpose of this course is to enhance, enrich, and build a solid instrumental music foundation of performance skills. The courses are performance-based which afford students the opportunity to showcase their talents in class as well as out of class in small and large group performances. The curriculum is comprehensive for all orchestra instruments and facilitates growth at all levels of skill and talents. It is the goal of the Taylor Road Middle School Orchestra to instill a lifelong love of music and playing in our students.

Instrumental Music Participation Fee

Students participating in orchestra will be charged a **fee of $75 per year**. This fee will be used to offset the cost of guest clinicians, concert polos, t-shirts, awards, rewards, transportation, music, materials, and other needs. Families with financial concern should reach out to the director to work out other arrangements.

Please submit the payment through the School Cash website (formerly OSP) by Thursday, **August 20, 2026.** Link provided through our orchestra website.

Materials

Orchestra Instrument

Students are **expected** to rent an instrument from a local music store. It is extremely beneficial for you and your student to rent from a local music store with high quality products. Music stores will adequately maintain and repair any damages to the instrument. Music stores typically exchange rental instruments when your student outgrows them. However, if there is a financial concern regarding rental, please reach out to Mrs. Paul-Nally as soon as possible.
Rental information is on the next page as well as our website.

Method Books:

Sixth Grade – Essentials Elements for Strings – Book 1**
Seventh Grade – Essentials Elements for Strings – Book 2**
Eighth Grade – method books will be provided in class.

**This year, all method books will be supplied to students as part of your orchestra fees. However, if a student loses the provided book, they must purchase a replacement through *School Cash* for $10.

Orchestra Supplies:

Binders, sheet protectors, t-shirts, and concert polos will all be provided this year through the orchestra participation fee.

Students who choose to play violin or viola are required to have their own shoulder rest. These can be purchased from any music store, or Amazon.

- Rosin: It is recommended that each student have their own rosin, it can be purchased from any music store
- **Shoulder Rest: for violin and viola players**.
- Soft cloth: for wiping down strings after playing. Old wash cloths or cut up t-shirts work great!
- Shoulder rest: for violins and violas only. Be sure to try with instrument before purchasing.
- Rock stop: for cello and basses.
- 10-15 pages of lined notebook paper
- **Pencil(s)-** to be kept in your case, binder, or instrument cubby
- Music stand for home practice/ field trips (folding wire stand)

Instrument Storage:

Each student will be assigned a place to keep their instrument. Students will receive this assignment during the first few weeks of school. All instruments must be stored in the proper place. If instruments are not stored in the proper places, the director cannot be held responsible for misplaced or lost items.

- *Your name should be on your case, book, shoulder rest, and rock stop. Ms. Paul will help you label everything with masking tape.*

- *Violins and violas keep a soft cloth in your case.*
- *Violins and violas keep their cases under or next to their chair, make sure it is closed!*
- *Each student is responsible for putting away their instrument and music at the end of class.*
- *Books and music binders can be kept in the instrument cubby (for violins and violas) or an assigned bookshelf. Students may also keep these materials in their bookbags to take home for home practice.*

Instrument Rental

All students are **expected** to rent instruments from the local music stores as the quality of the instruments is much higher. Many music stores have rent-to-own programs that allow you to contribute your monthly payments to the price of the instrument. Flyers and information will be sent home on recommended shops in the area. However, if there is a financial concern regarding instrument rental, please reach out to Mrs. Paul-Nally as soon as possible. This information is also on our website.

Music Stores in the area:

- Atlanta Violins
- Beau Vinci Violins
- Huthmaker Violins
- Ken Stanton Music
- Mandarin Strings
- Ronald Sachs Violins

We **strongly advise against the purchase of instruments online. You get what you pay for, and many instruments purchased online will easily break and not be sustainable for your students use. Please consult Mrs. Paul-Nally before any rentals or purchases online. String instruments are made of wood, so they should always be wood colored! Painted instruments are not permitted.**

Performance Attire

The Taylor Road Orchestra performance attire consists of the following:

Sixth/Seventh Grade White TRMS Orchestra Polo, black dress pants, black dress shoes, black flats, or 1" heels (black socks)

Eighth Grade Black TRMS Orchestra Polo, black dress pants, black dress shoes, black flats, or 1" heels (black socks)

Absolutely no sandals, flip flops, sneakers, white socks, or black jeans.

Orchestra concerts are considered formal events for our students, and it is very important that students look their best for each performance. Please address uniform issues long before the concert date**. Students who arrive for a concert without acceptable clothing will not be allowed to**

participate in the event. If you need support in obtaining an outfit, please contact the director or principal as soon as possible, so we can work together to resolve this matter.

Performance Attendance

Students are expected to attend all performances and rehearsals unless the director has approved an acceptable excuse ***two weeks prior to the performance or rehearsal***. Early communication between teachers, students, and parents can prevent misunderstandings. Students who do not attend a performance must submit a recording of their concert music within 48 hours the concert or performance. Failure to submit a recording will result in points deducted from the students playing test grade.

Orchestra performances are intended to showcase the students' hard work and are also designed to teach stage and audience etiquette. Therefore, students are expected to behave in a courteous and professional manner before, during, and after all performances.

Performance attendance and after school rehearsals are required for students attending any orchestra field trips. Students who do not meet these requirements may not be eligible to participate in these special events.

Grading

Grades for all instrumental music classes are reported on a nine-week basis and are based on the following:

- Daily class participation and performance
- Playing and written exams
- Homework assignments, which includes home practice

Grades for orchestra are numeric grades and conduct grades consistent with Fulton County policy.

Expectations

We make every effort to teach students more than just the vocational skills they will need. In orchestra, students are expected to learn and demonstrate a strong work ethic, professional and respectful conduct, and good communication skills that are required in every workplace. In class and especially in the community, students are expected to:

- Show up early to events
- Prepared with the materials and attitude they need to perform their best
- Behave with a respectful, responsible, and positive demeanor toward themselves, each other, and their teachers, parents, and community members.

Rules and Consequences

1. Be on time to class and early to every rehearsal and performance.

2. Bring the materials you need- your instrument, music, and a pencil- and not the ones you don't: phones, work for another class, food/ drink (other than water), or other distractions.

3. Follow instructions the first time they are given.

4. Speak or play your instrument only when you've been instructed to do so.

5. Be respectful to yourself, your peers, your teacher, and the materials.

6. Try your best!

Students who choose to break the rules are also choosing to receive the following consequences:

- First offense—Verbal or visual warning and conference with teacher after class
- Second offense—Parent/Guardian contact
- Third offense— Parent/Guardian contact and detention

Event Calendar 2026-2027

TRMS Orchestra Event Calendar 2026-2027

**Fulton County Youth Orchestra Auditions See below for more information	Friday, August 18, 2026
Participation Fee Due Through *School Cash* website	Thursday, August 20, 2026
All State Registration Deadline *must have contacted Ms. Paul before this date! See below for more information	Thursday, October 1, 2026
Spooktacular – CHS Auditorium 8th grade only!	Thursday, October 29, 2026 Students stay after school Performances begin at 7:00PM
All State Orchestra District Audition *for registered students only	Saturday, October 24, 2026
Winter Concert – CHS Auditorium	Thursday**,** December 3, 2026 Performances begin at 6:30PM
Recruitment Tour Fiddle Group Members Only	Thursday, December 17, 2026
All State Orchestra Final Audition *for registered students only	Saturday, January 9, 2027
Mandatory Disney Parent Meeting 8th grade only	Wednesday, February 3, 2027 Will take place in orchestra room
Pre-LGPE Clinic 7th and 8th grade only CHS Auditorium	Tuesday, March 9, 2027
LGPE 7th and 8th grade only	March 18-20, 2027 Exact dates TBD
8th Grade Disney Trip	Thursday, April 1- Sunday, April 4, 2027
Spring Concert CHS Auditorium	Tuesday, May 4, 2027 Performances begin at 6:30PM

**Fulton County Youth Orchestra is an extracurricular ensemble that requires students to audition. It is a great opportunity to hone both individual and large ensemble skills. Students should have at least one year of experience to audition. More information can be found at fultoncountyyouthorchestra.com.

*All State Orchestra Auditions are intended for students who have developed advanced technique and skill on their instrument (usually with a minimum of 3 years of experience). More information can be found on our website (trmsorchestra.com) on the GMEA website (gmea.org). Students who pass all auditions will attend All State weekend at the Classic Center in Athens, Georgia from March 4-6, 2027. Parents/guardians are responsible for arranging all transportation and hotel accommodations.

Community Events:

7th Grade Orchestra Breakfast: During connections on Friday, May 14, 2027

6th Grade Pizza Party: During connections on Thursday, May 13, 2027

8th Grade Orchestra Banquet: After school on Friday, May 14, 2027 from 5:30-7:30PM. Will take place on the Taylor Road soccer field.

Rehearsal Schedule

After school Rehearsals

After school rehearsals are when students stay once the school day has ended to rehearse with their entire grade level in preparation for concerts and performances. This rehearsal time is vital for the success of all students and **attendance is required.**

Students who must miss rehearsal for any reason must have a parent or guardian communicate this via email with Ms. Paul at least one week prior to the rehearsal date.

Pick-up time is between 5:15-5:30PM. See grade specific dates below.

6th Grade
Tuesday, December 1st
Wednesday, April 28th

7th Grade
Thursday, November 19th
Thursday, March 4th
Thursday, April 22nd

8th Grade
Tuesday, October 27th
Tuesday, November 17th
Tuesday, April 27th
Tuesday, March 2nd

Rental Supply List

Bring this list with you to the music store when you rent your student's instrument. It will help guide you in collecting all required materials. Remember, a quality instrument is an investment in your child's musical education. If you have any questions, please let me know!
6th grade students will be sent home with a specific check-list within the first month of school, including their correct instrument size.

- Instrument of choice in **proper size** (Violin, viola, cello, or bass)**
  - Students should be measured in the store for the correct sized instrument
  - Proper sized bow
  - Instrument case
- **Shoulder rest for violins and violas:** try with instrument before leaving to ensure a proper fit
- Rock stop for celli and bass
- Cleaning cloth: for wiping down instrument after use
- Rosin for bow: can be purchased at any music store
- Spare strings (highly recommended)
- Folding music stand (recommended but not required)

Most beginning students (6th graders) will not need a full-sized instrument

Music Stores Near Us

- Atlanta Violins
- Beau Vinci Violins
- Huthmaker Violins
- Ken Stanton Music
- Ronald Sachs Violins

Handbook Acknowledgement 2026-2027

This paper is to be returned to Mrs. Paul-Nally. Please keep the rest of the packet for your reference!

Does your student have prior experience on a stringed instrument prior to middle school? If yes, please answer the following questions.

- What instrument does your student play? _____
- How many years have they played this instrument? _____
- Do they currently take private lessons? _____
    - If yes, where? _____

Occasionally, alternative time may be offered to students with private lessons who pass a playing test provided by Ms. Paul-Nally. Please understand this is at the discretion of the orchestra director.

By signing below, you acknowledge that you have read and understand the policies, procedures, and expectations of the Taylor Road Orchestra program.

Student Name (print): _____
Student Signature: _____

Parent Name (print): _____
Parent Signature: _____
Date: _____

If you are interested in private lessons for your student, please reach out to Mrs. Paul-Nally for more information