

# YPCO Handbook

Young People's Chamber Orchestra

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YPCO's mission is to provide an inspiring, positive musical learning experience for young musicians in the community. As a teaching orchestra, YPCO promotes a non-competitive and cooperative philosophy, welcoming the skills and talents of all our members with equal warmth. Through our scholarship program, we seek to represent in our musical family the rich diversity of our Bay Area community. We believe that, through music, our students develop their abilities to cooperate, focus, communicate and work towards a common goal.

The following outlines the Orchestra's policies and expectations for its musicians and their parents.

## **Registration**

Registration for YPCO is accessed through the "Register Here" button on YPCO.org. Musicians are allowed two trial rehearsals before registering. Emergency forms are also required as a part of the registration process.

## **Rehearsal Attendance**

Playing in an orchestra or chamber ensemble is a group experience, so absences impact not only individual progress but the ability of the group to rehearse effectively. YPCO's rehearsal attendance policy is designed to support the success of the orchestra and ensembles and to ensure performance quality.

At the start of each concert set, please write in any anticipated absences on the sign-in sheet. If conflicts arise after that, please contact YPCO as soon as possible. This will help us in choosing repertoire and planning rehearsals.

Attendance will be taken at every rehearsal; each musician is responsible for signing in on the Attendance Log.

Illnesses or unexpected emergencies should be communicated via [manager@ypco.org](mailto:manager@ypco.org) as soon as possible.

Attendance at the dress rehearsal is mandatory in order to participate in a concert. The Music Director, at his discretion, can make exceptions to the attendance policy.

## **Timeliness**

In order to make effective use of time, musicians are expected to arrive and be picked up on time. This is in consideration of the efforts and personal obligations of the orchestra staff, other musicians and parent volunteers.

Musicians are expected to be seated and ready to play at the designated start times, so please plan to arrive 10-15 minutes early in order to set up and tune your instruments.

Students must be picked up promptly at the end of each rehearsal so as not to inconvenience orchestra staff and parent volunteers. Please be considerate!

Parents are responsible for communicating pick up instructions to their children, i.e. where to wait, whether they may leave on their own, etc. As a courtesy, the parent or staff member on duty will wait a reasonable amount of time with musicians (but no longer than fifteen minutes) for late pick-ups. YPCO cannot be responsible for students after that time.

## **Preparation for Rehearsals**

The students will perform better and enjoy their orchestral experience more if they are prepared for rehearsal. An appropriate practice routine shows respect for fellow musicians, the conductor and coaches.

Musicians should practice YPCO pieces at home and in lessons during the week, especially when new music is passed out. They should arrive at each rehearsal well rested and on time, with their instrument, music and a pencil.

## **Behavior**

An important part of YPCO's mission is to teach teamwork, musical discipline and proper professional behavior. The expectations set out below are intended to help students succeed with their musical "team", and to ensure that the performances will be of high quality and enjoyable by all.

Musicians are expected to behave respectfully toward, and cooperate with instructions from the Music Director, Assistant Conductor, Orchestra Manager, coaches and parent volunteers at all times.

Musicians are not to leave the church grounds during rehearsals or concerts. For safety reasons, they are not to play or gather in the parking lot or near the driveways before or after rehearsals or concerts or during breaks. Please do not bring skates, skateboards, roller blades, electronic games, etc. to rehearsals and concerts. Bicycles are allowed, if used as transportation to and from rehearsals, but may not be ridden during breaks.

Additionally, students are not to wander through the church. Other groups use the facility at the same time, and we do not want to disturb them. During breaks, students may gather, eat their snack and play quietly on the front lawn of the church. Please be sure to put all trash in appropriate containers, and treat the St. John's facility and property with care at all times.

Musicians are expected to wear concert dress to each performance, and behave appropriately before, during and after concerts.

Parents are responsible for communicating to, and enforcing these behavior expectations and safety regulations with their children.

### **Solo Policy**

We love to offer opportunities for orchestra members to perform as soloists with the orchestra. The following are the guidelines used in choosing soloists:

- 1) As the beginning of each concert set approaches, players and their teachers are both welcome to suggest potential solo or chamber music projects. Even great projects may be turned down if they are suggested too late.
- 2) The players involved need to be quite comfortable with their orchestral parts for the concert set, and able to take on the additional challenge of preparing their solo.
- 3) If it is a solo piece, the player should be ready to play it for the conductor and assistant conductor.
- 4) The orchestra must be able to accompany the suggested piece.
- 5) All soloists and repertoire will be approved at the discretion of the music director.

### **Concert Dress**

YPCO Chamber Orchestra wears white collared dress shirts with black pants or skirts and black shoes. A black dress is also acceptable. Skirts should be knee length and comfortably worn while seated.

YPCO Advanced Ensemble wears white collared dress shirts with black pants or skirts and black shoes. A black dress is also acceptable. Advanced Ensemble members may also choose to wear a black tie and jacket. This distinguishes

them from the Chamber Orchestra members who do not wear ties or jackets. Skirts should be knee length and comfortably worn while seated.

### **Tuition and Tuition Assistance**

All students must be registered through the YPCO online registration system. Tuition may be paid in full or in automatic payments with a deposit. Registration is a commitment to pay the full tuition amount. Enrolling in the payment plan is not a pay-as-you-go situation. Families are responsible for the entire tuition even if the musician decides not to finish the season.

There is a limited scholarship fund for assistance to families with an annual income below \$50,000. To be eligible, families must submit a letter of request and recent tax forms, W2's and/or 1099's. If your family qualifies for assistance, the orchestra manager will give you a coupon code to use when you are registering online. You may choose to pay the remainder in a single payment or automatic payments with a deposit. If you are divorced, separated, or have never been married, the other legal parent/guardian of your child must also provide the above documents. Our policy is to encourage all legal parents'/guardians' involvement in funding their child's education. If the other legal parent/guardian is unavailable or unwilling to participate in providing all necessary information, we will not be able to reduce their half of the tuition amount.

In no case will tuition be refunded. We realize that there are many serious circumstances, such as family illness or transfers out of state that may prevent a child from completing the year. However, as a small non-profit organization, we are unable to continue to operate without a stable financial base.

### **Parent Participation**

YPCO relies upon parent volunteers to support its activities. Parent involvement is an important part of the YPCO tradition, and serves as a model of teamwork and participation for our children. Additionally, the activities made possible by our parent volunteers enrich the YPCO experience for our young musicians.

Each family is required to:

- Attend the fall parent meeting
- Sign up for 3 volunteer jobs
- Sign up for 2 snacks (Main Orchestra only) Please note all snacks are peanut free. Bottled water is not allowed in St. John's church.

On [YPCO.org](http://YPCO.org) you will find a link to [volunteerspot.com](http://volunteerspot.com) where you can sign up for your jobs.

## **Enforcement of Policies**

The Orchestra Manager and/or Board President are responsible for working with parents and students to resolve any issue that may arise. If a resolution cannot be reached by first talking with the musician, the Board President or Orchestra Manager will contact the parents for assistance. In the event that the problem is not resolved, the administration will determine the next step and work with the parents and students to reach an agreement or solution. Possible remedies for poor behavior include asking parents to attend rehearsals with their child, suspending the musician for one concert, or asking the musician to withdraw from the orchestra.

## **Musician Concerns/Questions**

A musician with a concern or question should talk with the Music Director as soon as possible. We strongly urge that musicians, rather than parents, talk with the Music Director, at least as a first step.

## **Contact Information and Communication**

YPCO Orchestra manager communicates information regarding rehearsals, concerts, etc. with families through email updates. These are generally not more than once a week and not less than once a month.

YPCO  
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