

Maryvale Middle School

6th Grade Orchestra
7/8th Grade Orchestra

2026-2027 Handbook



Ms. Fortais

6th Orchestra, 7/8th Orchestra Director

Dear students and parents,

I would like to welcome everyone back to another great education and music-filled year! I hope that everyone enjoyed their summers while getting a lot of practice in as well.

For any new students and families to our program, I would like to welcome you and introduce myself. My name is Ms. Fortais, and I am the director of the 6th grade orchestra and the 7/8th grade orchestra. We have been working very hard in this district to build up a strong music program for the future!

In this handbook you will find expectations, grading policies, concert dates, required music events, and other helpful tips and guidelines for our young musicians. After carefully reading this handbook, I ask that **every student and parent complete the last page of this handbook and return it to me by Friday, September 18th, 2026.**

I am looking forward to a fantastic year of new friendships, wonderful music-making, and learning as we all grow as an ensemble together. Highlighted are some new additions to our orchestra class and program, so please read through this handbook and keep it for future reference.

Musically yours,

Ms. Anna Fortais

6th Grade Orchestra, director

7/8th Grade Orchestra, director



Lessons and Grading Policy

Every student is expected to be in attendance for rehearsals and lessons (with their instrument, music, folder, and a pencil) unless the student has an excused absence according to the school's attendance policy. The following is this year's class schedule for the middle school:

7/8th Grade Orchestra - Mod 2, days 1, 3, 5 (8:20-9:00)

6th Grade Orchestra - Mod 6, days 1, 3, 5 (11:15-11:58)

Lessons

Students will be placed in lesson groups according to their instrument and level of playing ability. Lessons will take place based on a rotating schedule. On Thursday, students will be able to attend lessons on a rotating schedule mods 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 8 and 9. On Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday lessons will take place during mods 1, 2, and 6. **Please be aware that these are my only available lesson times for middle school students.** Students should not miss one particular class more than once per month or so, but there might be instances where this occurs. All students will receive a copy of the lesson schedule. The lesson schedule will also be posted on Google Classroom and will be featured on the morning announcements. Students are required to attend their lessons unless they have an excused absence pre-approved by myself before the lesson. **Excused lessons may include: test in class, excused school absence, school field trip, or class presentations. If a lesson is missed, it is the student's responsibility to find a time to make it up with the teacher.** Students can make up lessons during any other lesson on the schedule with teacher approval. Watch for Google Classroom updates for opportunities to make up lessons. Lessons will begin on September 22nd, 2026.

Students will be responsible for any written and playing assignments that are given during lessons. Students will be graded based on lesson attendance, preparedness, practice chart completion and effort/practice outside of lessons and orchestra class.

★ After school time- NEW!

Ms. Fortais will be available in room 184 during after school hours on Thursday **only** for make up lesson grades, practice time (this can count towards your weekly practice goal) or for extra help on instrumental music.

Grading Policy

Grading for orchestra will be based on the following scale:

- Effort/Participation: 30%
- Lessons: 30%
- Required Concert Attendance (MP2, MP3, MP4): 20%
- Preparation/Attendance: 20%

★ Practice Charts

A new addition to our orchestra class is practice charts. Students will be required to practice at least **30 minutes per week**, but longer practice times are encouraged. Students may spread the practice minutes out however they wish throughout the week. The practice chart must be signed by a parent/guardian at the end of each week or before their next orchestra lesson. **Signed practice charts will count for 8 points of your student's lesson grade and can only be made up by completing more practice time.** Students will always benefit from practicing their instrument outside of school, and will find that their skills advance quickly.

Extra Credit

If a student misses a lesson, they may bring in an extracurricular ensemble program of a concert that they performed in or attended, (such as the Greater Buffalo Youth Orchestra, Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra, All-County/All-State solo festival or ensembles, a church group, private lessons, etc), to gain full credit for the missed lesson. One program is allowed per quarter.

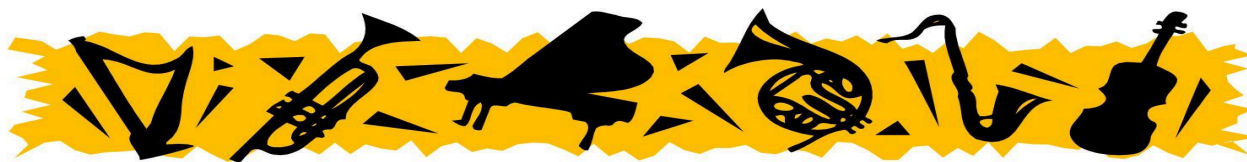
★ Concert Dress

Concert attire is **required for each concert** for the bands and orchestras and is as follows:

Girls: Long or short sleeve black dress shirt; black pants or skirt (must be below the knee); black socks/tights; all black dress shoes, no shorts or logos.

Boys: Long sleeve black dress shirt or short sleeve plain black polo; black pants; black socks; all black dress shoes, no shorts or logos

In order for an ensemble to look and be treated as professionals, we must dress uniformly as such. If you have any questions/comments/concerns regarding concert dress, please do not hesitate to contact Ms. Fortais via email at fortais@maryvaleufsd.org

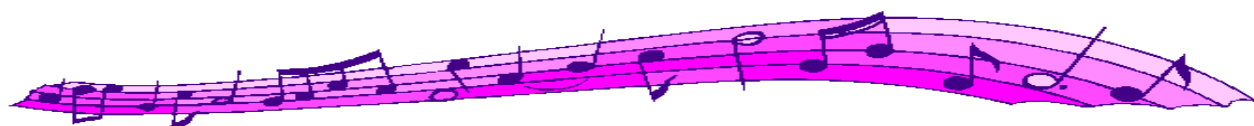


Performance Dates and Events

★ = Required concert attendance for your child's ensemble

- September 18, 2026: Handbook Permission Slips DUE
- September 22, 2026: First rehearsal with instruments, lessons begin
- October 22, 2026: Tunes and Treats Fundraiser for Maryvale HS (6:00pm)
- ★ December 10, 2026: **6th Grade Winter Concert (6:00pm)**
- Report to the high school cafeteria at 5:30pm
- ★ December 10, 2026: **7/8th Grade Winter Concert (7:15pm)**
- Report to the high school cafeteria at 6:45pm
- February 26 and 27, 2027 Maryvale High School's musical production of Shrek
- ★ March 18, 2027: **Pops Concert - Grades 7-12 only (7:00pm)**
- Report to the high school cafeteria at 6:30
- ★ June 2, 2027: **6th Grade Spring Concert (6:00pm)**
- Report to the high school cafeteria at 5:30pm
- ★ June 2, 2027: **7/8th Grade Spring Concert (7:15pm)**
- Report to the high school cafeteria at 6:45pm
- June 11, 2027: Final day to turn in school-owned instruments

This schedule of events is subject to change. Some of the times may be changed, and some events may be added throughout the year.



Local Music Stores

Twin Village Music

44 Central Ave., Lancaster, NY 14086 (716) 683-4879

- Instrument sales and rentals, instrument supplies, and music books.

The Music Room

444 Borden Rd., Buffalo, NY 14224 (716) 668-5441

- Instrument sales and rentals, instrument supplies, and music books.

Northtown Music

3648 Harlem Rd., Cheektowaga, NY 14215 (716) 838-3835

- Instrument sales and rentals, instrument supplies, and music books.

Monaco's Violin Shop

55 Crosspoint Pkwy., Amherst, NY 14068 (716) 688-8600

- String instrument rentals, repairs, and supplies.



Please complete and submit this form to Ms. Fortais by:

Due to Ms. Fortais by September 18th, 2026

I _____ have read the Maryvale Middle School orchestra handbook and
I understand and will follow all rules and policies of the music department.

Student Signature

Date



I _____ have read the Maryvale Middle School orchestra handbook and
I understand and will help my child towards following all the rules and policies of the music
department.

___ I am interested in helping out with any extra activities that might occur during the school
year in the music department.

___ I am interested in being a part of the Maryvale Music Boosters!!!

Email Address: _____

___ If a school day field trip were to be planned in the Spring, I would potentially be available
to chaperone!

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

Phone Number

