



# CHORUS AND ORCHESTRA HANDBOOK

WELCOME TO OUR MUSIC  
FAMILY

2024/2025



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# Welcome Message



**Mrs. Malissa A. Baker**  
*Director*

Welcome to the world of orchestra/chorus! This handbook is your golden ticket to a fantastic year in my class. No musical background needed - I'm here to ignite your passion for music through basic skills with your voice, orchestra instrument, or even a steel drum. Get ready to dive into top-notch music pieces for voices and string orchestra, and show off your talents at concerts, events, and festivals!

The content is like a musical buffet, serving up instrument TLC, ensemble magic, skill-building, music theory, jam sessions, and even a sprinkle of music history. Learning music is like planting a garden - it takes time, but the sweet melodies you'll harvest with your loved ones are priceless. Everyone dances to their own beat, but rest assured, you'll all reach the music summit! Just tune up daily, and you'll be rocking out in no time! Heads up - according to the Florida Department of Education, students are required to perform music outside of school hours!

**Please complete the Course Acknowledgment on page 13 with your parent/guardian and turn it in to Mrs. Baker on or before Thursday, August 29th as one of your first grades for class.**





# Expectations

## The CREEK Standard of Excellence

In addition to the 5 B's of BCMS: (BEST, PREPARED, RESPECTFUL, APPROPRIATE, ON TIME) we follow "The Creek" Standard of Excellence.

The **CREEK** Standard of Excellence:

**C-** CREATE a positive environment for myself and the ensemble

**R-** RESPECT my director, other people and myself

**E-** ENGAGE in all current activities and actively participate

**E-** ENSURE I am always prepared and on time

**K-** KEEP the level of excellence high

## Consequences

**1st Violation:** Warning

**2nd Violation:** Seat Change & Parent Contact

**3rd Violation:** Parent Contact & Time Out

**4th Violation:** Referral

In addition to the above consequences, the student may also have their instrument/computer privilege(s) revoked.

## Cell Phone Policy

Student cell phones and electronic devices are not permitted out, on, or visible in the orchestra/chorus classroom or practice/ensemble rooms, including charging.

**1st Violation:** Warning

**2nd Violation:** Parent contact, phone turned in to teacher and given back at the end of class

**3rd+ Violation:** Parent contact, phone turned in to teacher and given to office for parent pick-up.



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# Procedures

## 1 Entering

1. Students will enter the class through the "IN" door and start to collect their assigned materials necessary for class.
2. Place bookbag/school approved water bottle/personal materials inside of instrument locker and/or assigned backpack storage location.
3. Set up their area with their instrument and supplies (binder, folder, pencil, etc.)
4. If using a computer for NinGenius, students must set up a tv tray table, get their assigned computer from the computer cart, and follow all School District of Manatee County electronic usage protocol.
5. A student is considered tardy if they are not entirely in the classroom BEFORE the tardy bell rings.

## 2 Exiting

1. All materials must be properly put away in their correct location and order, including computers\* (if used).
2. Students need to remain in their assigned seat, Mrs. Baker will dismiss the class, not the bell.

\*Students will LOG OUT and SHUT DOWN the computer, place it back in the assigned, numbered location within the cart, and plug the correct numbered charging cord in the computer to charge.

## 3 Materials

Students enrolled my courses are provided with all the necessary supplies for my classroom. Each supply has a specific location and order for storage and organization. It is expected that each student put these supplies back in the appropriate location and order for the next class period. Notify Mrs. Baker IMMEDIATELY (by raising your hand from your assigned seat) if anything is damaged or was not put away correctly.



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# Instrument Sign Out

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School owned, string instruments may be taken home once the student has turned in their signed, Course Acknowledgment (page 11). Instruments must be returned the next school day so the student has an instrument to use in class and also due to multiple classes sharing instruments. Sign out procedures are strictly enforced. Instruments may be checked out on weekends, long weekends, and holidays using the same sign-out procedures.

1. Students must turn in a signed and completed Course Acknowledgment before they can take a string instrument home even if one was completed last school year.
2. Students must have a sign-out pass from Mrs. Baker and additionally receive permission from their 7th period teacher to report to the orchestra room the last 5 minutes of the school day or when announcements are made for car rider, walker, bike rider dismissal.
3. When students enter the orchestra classroom 7th period, they are to return the sign-out pass to Mrs. Baker. (Lost sign-out passes will result in a \$3 replacement fee).
4. Mrs. Baker will then record their instrument number in the sign-out log. If the assigned instrument is not available (someone checked it out before you) another instrument will be provided in its place with the new number being recorded. (Course Acknowledgment rules apply to the instrument being taken home).
5. Students must remain in the orchestra room until the dismissal bell and/or their mode of transportation has been called.

**Unless otherwise instructed, there will not be any instrument sign-outs when Mrs. Baker is not on campus, only returns.**



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# Instrument Sign In

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A "signed-out" instrument must be returned the next school day. Students will report to their designated areas, by grade level, with their instrument. When the bell rings to dismiss students to dismiss to first period, students will then be permitted to the orchestra room to return their instrument in the appropriate locker. Failure to return an instrument will result in a class participation grade deduction for each school day that the instrument is off school property or until the cost of replacement has been paid in full. (Absences and family emergencies are exempt.) If any incidents occurred while the instrument was signed out, please do not try and repair the instrument yourself or ask a family member to do so, report the issue to Mrs. Baker immediately. Instruments must be returned in the working order in which they were signed out, with all parts (i.e. bow or shoulder rest). No instruments are to be left in the hallway in front of Mrs. Baker's classroom door, this is a safety issue.



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# Passes

## 1 Teacher

Consideration may be made for a student to go to another teacher's classroom if: (A) the requesting teacher has made an electronic, phone, or face-to-face communication with Mrs. Baker ahead of time (B) the student also has a pass from the requesting staff member (C) student going to the requesting teacher does not interfere with the lesson within the music classroom. This does not guarantee the student will be allowed to go as Mrs. Baker has the final decision.

## 2 Restroom

Students needing to use the restroom must ask permission, by raising their hand while seated in their assigned seat and receive permission from the teacher. Students will not be permitted to leave class to fill up a water bottle. Water bottles must be filled during transition times and all water bottles placed in locker or designated area, no water bottles are allowed at seats. Procedures for restroom usage are as follows:

1. Students must PRINT and complete the information in the Exit Log
2. Obtain an **ORANGE** pass from Mrs. Baker
3. Press the LED "Restroom" light to red (indicating a student is out)
4. Only use the restroom in the **ORANGE** hallway\*
5. Return the **ORANGE** pass to Mrs. Baker's Pass Box
6. Complete the "Time In" portion of the Exit Log
7. Turn the LED "Restroom" light to green (indicating all students are in class)

\***ORANGE** passes are usage of restrooms located in the **ORANGE** hallway ONLY. In the event the **ORANGE** restroom is out of order, students will ask Mrs. Baker which restrooms to use.





# Grade Calculations

## Participation

The Manatee County Grading Scale is used for this class. Points will be deducted if a student is not participating in a positive and productive rehearsal manner. If a student chooses not to play or participate in the daily lesson, he/she will lose their points for that day and/or receive a written assignment. If a student chooses to misbehave and is asked to pack up early, they have chosen to not participate for that day and will lose their points. Points will not be deducted for excused absences. If a student is unable to participate due medical reasons or illness, the nurse or parent/guardian should notify Mrs. Baker.

## Quizzes & Tests

Practice is a homework expectation to support instrument development and supplement skills taught in class. Orchestra Karate and/or performance tests will be administered to check that "homework" is completed. On posted test dates, students must perform a required excerpt on the date it is assigned. If a student does not pass the test, they can make arrangements to retake the test, one time within 5 school days. In the event of an unexpected loss of class time for testing, i.e. fire drill, students will have an in-class make up day, the very next school day. This also applies to written tests and quizzes.

## Concert(s)

Concerts are 50% of their total quarter grade for that quarter. Concert Grade Calculation:

- 10%** Arriving on time and in "Concert Attire" (as listed as "Call Time")
- 10%** Backstage and onstage etiquette
- 20%** Having all of your concert equipment (instrument, music, etc.)
- 20%** Audience Etiquette
- 40%** Performance with your ensemble



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# Concert Information

## Concert Attendance



Participation in scheduled music performances are mandatory. An alternative assignment may be allowed for students with excused absences. Failing to meet the performance criteria due to an unexcused absence will result in an "F" (calculated at 59% if two-week notice is given, a 0 if notification is less than two weeks or not given at all). If your child is unable to attend (either excused or unexcused), a two week notification by email/phone is required once the music calendar has been distributed; the time frame is waived in the event of an emergency. It is the student's responsibility for contacting the teacher to inquire about any excused/unexcused absence, as well as any alternative assignment (if one applies).

An excused absence includes: Serious illness, religious holiday, family emergency participation in varsity level sports, end-of-season playoff or championship, or situations assessed at teacher discretion to be excused. Documentation is required for an excused absence. Make-up work may require an alternative assignment. This may include (but may not be limited to) the following, as directed by the teacher: research paper (8-10 pages), written exam, solo performance for teacher/class, or choice of project with teacher approval.

An unexcused absence includes, but is not limited to: Work, family matters/obligations/plans, transportation, athletic practices/try-outs, attending other concerts/sporting events, lack of concert attire, forgot, or situations assessed at teacher discretion to be unexcused.

Concert dates are posted on the school website, reviewed at the Orchestra Sit-In, reminder letters are sent home, and notifications sent through the FOCUS portal.

**There are absolutely NO clothing or food drop offs the day of the concert before, during, or right after school; the parent/guardian MUST bring these items with them when they arrive at the concert.**



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# Concert Information, Continued

## Concert Attire



Students are required to wear either a white top and black bottom or ALL black.

**Tops:** A button down dress shirt (long or short sleeved, tucked), a collared dress shirt, or a collared polo shirt.

**Bottoms:** Dress pants, knee-length or longer skirts (female cello players are not permitted to wear skirts unless shorts or leggings are worn underneath), gauchos. Jeans are not permitted, including black jeans.

**Shoes:** ANY CLEAN shoe is acceptable, yes, including sneakers.

**Dress:** Dresses must be tea length or longer with sleeves, either short sleeves or long sleeves. Spaghetti straps are not permitted.

Students who are not dressed properly\* for performances will have points deducted or not be permitted to perform. No exceptions!

Upper level performers who compete or represent our school in All State, District, County, and/or other concerts outside of Buffalo Creek are required to wear ALL BLACK. Female performers must wear a tea length dress with black pantyhose and black dress shoes OR black dress pants, black long-sleeved dress shirt, black dress socks, and black dress shoes. Male performers must wear black dress pants, a long-sleeved dress shirt (button down), black dress socks, and black dress shoes.

\*Contact Mrs. Baker at least one month in advance if you are unable to purchase the appropriate concert attire so we can find the resources to obtain them for you.



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# Concert Attire Pictures :: :: ::

Examples of proper concert attire:

## Tops



## Bottoms



## Dress





# Concert & Event Dates

DATE	EVENT NAME	CLASS	COMMENTS
August 24, 2024	Inspire & Empower SSA Choral Festival Riverview High School	7th & 8th Grade Chorus Students	9 a.m. - 9 p.m.
October 4-5, 2024	All County Orchestra	Orchestra	Audition Only
November 21, 2024 <b>TENTATIVE</b>	Black Violin Concert at Van Wezel Performing Arts Center	Orchestra & Chorus	11: 00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
December 12, 2024	Winter Concert BCMS Cafeteria	Orchestra 2/3 & Chorus	7:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.
January 1-11, 2025	All State Orchestra Tampa	Orchestra	Audition Only
February 7, 2025	EPCOT Field Trip Orlando	Orchestra 2/3 & Chorus 2/3	First Come
April 22, 2025	Level 2/3 Orchestra & Chorus Spring Concert BCMS Cafeteria	Orchestra 2/3 & Chorus	7:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.
April 24, 2025	Beginner Orchestra Spring Concert BCMS Cafeteria	Beginner Orchestra	7:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.
TBD	Men's Chorus Festival	Chorus	
TBD	Middle School Honor Chorus	Chorus	
TBD	Solo & Ensemble	Orchestra	



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# Course Contract



It is understood that the Buffalo Creek Music Department and the Manatee County School District is providing an instrument for the student listed on the back of this form. Use of a school owned instrument is a privilege that may be revoked if this agreement is broken. Student liability is to be determined by Mrs. Baker in cooperation with school administration.

An assigned instrument is for the use of this student for participation in class, concerts, and at home practice. The student on this contract is solely responsible for the safety of the instrument, folder, music and/or class equipment during their class and when the student has the instrument signed out or in class use. General maintenance repairs will be provided, and the instrument will be kept in good working order by the school for the student.

If the instrument or accessories are damaged in or out of class by the student (dropped on purpose, strings broken due to defiance, cracking instrument case, walking over a cello or bass, turning pegs, etc.), or if the instrument (or parts of the instrument), folder, or music are lost, damaged, stolen or destroyed while in the student's possession, the parent/guardian of the student will be responsible for the cost of repair/replacement.

Please do not try and repair an instrument at home. Instruments must be repaired by professionals. Attempting to repair your own instrument may result in more fees or total replacement costs. If an instrument/accessory breaks or is damaged in your care, you are required to notify Mrs. Baker immediately so that the instrument can be repaired/replaced in a timely manner. (Continued on next page.)

Computers are a regular part of class as the technology allows students to learn music theory, match pitch, vocal technique, fingering, tuning, and other musical concepts with the use of software specifically designed for music classes. Students are to follow and abide by the district electronic usage policies, school-based policies, and additionally adhere to content specific to my course. Students are not permitted to use the computer for social media, checking their grades, doing homework/classwork for another course, change the appearance of wallpaper or display of the computer etc., or damage the computer.



# Course Acknowledgment

13

Student Last Name (printed) \_\_\_\_\_

Class Period \_\_\_\_\_

## Student

I, \_\_\_\_\_, promise to always try my best, be  
(Student Name Printed)

respectful to my teacher and fellow classmates. I will be respectful to the learning environment by always modeling good behavior and staying on task. I will respect the music rooms and equipment and practice the music assigned to fulfill my responsibility to the overall ensemble sound. I will reach out for assistance when needed and try my best daily and follow: the 5 B's of BCMS, The CREEK Standard of Excellence, and all Expectations, Procedures listed within this handbook.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature

## Parent/Guardian

I/we have read and agree to the terms listed within this Contract and the Orchestra and Chorus Handbook. Signing this form is acceptance of the obligations set forth wherein to support and preserve the availability and quality of instrument, technology, positive atmosphere, citizenship, and musicianship within the music classroom. If at any time questions/concerns arise regarding my child's enrollment/participation in this course, I will first contact Mrs. Baker, directly and promptly at bakerm@Manateeschools.net

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Name (printed):

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Signature

Date \_\_\_\_\_





## Contact Information

**Mrs. Malissa A. Baker**



941-721-2260 extension 21092 or 21093



[bakerm@manateeschools.net](mailto:bakerm@manateeschools.net)



7320 69th Street East Palmetto, FL 34221



[www.manateeschools.net/domain/2800](http://www.manateeschools.net/domain/2800)

## About Mrs. Baker

Currently in my 25th year as a music educator, I have the privilege of working on the FMEA (Florida Music Education Association) Emerging Leader Committee with Dr. Dakeyan (Dre) Graham and the NAFME (National Association for Music Education) CAN Project. My Bachelor of Arts Degree, Cum Laude, was earned at West Liberty State College, now West Liberty University, in WV. Certified in music Education K-12 with both ESOL and Reading Endorsements, I presently teach orchestra and chorus at Buffalo Creek Middle School. Named a High Impact Teacher from the Commissioner of Education and a panelist/presenter at the NAFME (National Association for Music Education) Conference 2019 are a few of my favorite opportunities. Believing in servant leadership, volunteering with the Orlando Philharmonic, Salvation Army, Southeastern Guide Dogs, Inc., Sarasota Parrot Conservatory, and many others is a passion of mine. Co-Sponsoring the BCMS chapter of the NJHS I have the opportunity to guide students in: raising over \$3,000 for the American Heart Association, \$1,000 in new toys donated to Johns Hopkins All Children's Hospital and dedicate over 900+ service hours a year.

