



PROJECT HARMONY

Family Handbook 2024-2025



Charlotte Symphony Orchestra



PROJECT
HARMONY



ARTS PLUS



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ABOUT PROJECT HARMONY

Project Harmony is a free after school music program operated by The Charlotte Symphony and Arts+ aimed at building pathways to success for Charlotte-area youth. The program creates social transformation through music by engaging children in orchestra programs that foster skill development and personal empowerment. Inspired by the internationally acclaimed Venezuelan El Sistema model, Project Harmony builds community through the collaborative act of music making.

Project Harmony establishes a model society where we prioritize shared aspiration and investment over an atmosphere of competition. Project Harmony acts as a model society in which an atmosphere of competition between individuals is replaced with shared aspiration and investment. The program's instruction is based on ensemble experiences led by qualified music teachers, focusing on group learning and practice. In addition to large ensemble work, intern coaches and volunteers support sectional learning.

We embrace social change through music and build social capital in communities that face a disproportionate number of difficulties. As the El Sistema founder, José Antonio Abreu says, "Music is an irreplaceable instrument in uniting people."

PROJECT HARMONY CALENDAR & CLASS CANCELLATION

Project Harmony follows the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS) calendar and will meet only when school is in session, including early release days. Please be aware of holidays and teacher workdays. The official Project Harmony calendar can be found on our website at charlottesymphony.org/project-harmony/

For all other reasons, families will be given notification via email whenever Project Harmony is not in session or is cancelled. In addition to email, text message through Remind will be used to send emergency updates about class changes or cancellations. ***Please be sure to opt-in to receive text notifications when prompted.***

If CMS uses one of their make-up days, Project Harmony will NOT be in session.



ATTENDANCE

We expect our students and families to commit to attending the program on all required days. Although we understand that there are family emergencies, **we limit the number of unexcused absences to 8 per year.** If your student exceeds this amount, you will be contacted regarding your student's place in the program.

To receive an excused absence, you must contact the Project Harmony Staff via email prior to the absence or within the same week of the absence. Student illness, family emergencies, religious holidays, and school related activities are considered excused absences.

Classes are held on CMS half days. We encourage all students to attend these classes, but those who are unable to attend on these days will be excused.

STUDENT BEHAVIOR

Students must...

- Show respect to Project Harmony teachers, staff, and other students always.
- Follow instructions from teachers and staff.
- Demonstrate responsibility for site property, class materials, and instruments.

If a student is struggling to follow the behavior expectations in place from Project Harmony during class time, the following procedure will be used:

- **1st Offense** – Verbal warning
- **2nd Offense** – Talk with Project Harmony staff and self-reflection
- **3rd Offense** – Project Harmony Staff talks to parent/guardian =1 Discipline Referral.

Students will be allowed 3 Discipline Referrals per semester:

- **1st Discipline Referral** – Parent meeting
- **2nd Discipline Referral** – Parent meeting and suspension for 1 week (2 meeting days)
- **3rd Discipline Referral** – Eligible for program expulsion

Examples of classrooms offences include but are not limited to: minor disruptions (talking out, out-of-seat); disrespect towards other students and staff members; inappropriate language; physical aggression/contact, property and instrument damage.



DISMISSAL

The authorized pick-up person is expected to pick their student up in the carpool line with a Project Harmony name tag on the dashboard of their vehicle (provided by us) OR outside the building (if no vehicle). Authorized persons are expected to pick up students **within 15 minutes of the site dismissal time.**

Students will only be released to adults listed as parents/guardians/emergency contacts on your student's registration form. For a student to be dismissed to a person not already on file, please contact Project Harmony staff in advance.

Late Pick-Up Penalties: For every minute, a parent/guardian is late picking up a student after the stated closing (15 minutes past), a late pick-up fee of \$1 is charged per minute. After the third late pick-up and habitual and excessive late pick-ups, a student may be excluded from the program.

CONCERTS

ATTENDANCE

Students are **not allowed** to miss any of the three rehearsals leading up to the concert date and must also attend the dress rehearsal on the concert date. Students must stay for the entire dress rehearsal on the day of the concert. They may not, for any reason, leave and return for the concert that evening.

CONCERT ATTIRE

Proper concert attire includes dark pants, a dress or skirt, and a Project Harmony T-shirt. Bottoms should reach the knee, with no rips or holes. Students will have an opportunity to change for the concert at the site before the performance. Students should wear their concert attire or bring their concert attire with them on performance days and will not be permitted to leave to get clothing for the concert.

*****NOTE:** Failure to adhere to these policies could result in a student being unable to perform at the concert.



INSTRUMENT CARE

Students are responsible for taking care of their assigned instrument throughout the year. The program will cover costs associated with the normal daily wear and tear of the instrument. Students will face associated consequences, and the parent/guardian are financially responsible for any damage caused to the instrument due to neglect, lack of proper care/maintenance, or mistreatment, as determined by Project Harmony teachers and staff.

GUIDELINES FOR PROPER CARE OF INSTRUMENTS

1. Always return the instrument to its case after each use.
2. Properly close the case each time it is used and double check the latches to ensure it is closed securely.
3. Clean and maintain the instrument each time it is used following the teacher's directions.
4. Carefully place the instrument when moving it. Never throw or toss the instrument, even in its case.
5. **Safely store your instrument indoors and in a safe location. Never leave your instrument in the sun, in a car, outside, or in a humid place.**
6. Store instruments in a safe place.
7. Leave your instrument tag in place.
8. Notify your Project Harmony teacher immediately if the instrument is damaged or not working properly.

TAKING AN INSTRUMENT HOME

To be eligible to take home an instrument, a student must:

- Sit using correct posture with and without their instrument.
- Show proper care for their instrument according to the proper care guidelines when transporting, removing it from the case, and cleaning it.
- Demonstrate responsibility in class by following directions, actively listening, participating, and following the instrument care guidelines, when applicable.
- Return a signed Instrument Take-Home form which outlines correct practice procedures, the importance of bringing their instrument to class, and potential costs associated with damage due to neglect, lack of proper care/maintenance, or mistreatment, as determined by Project Harmony teachers and staff.

*First year students in grades 2-5 may be able to take their instruments home starting in January 2025. Older students in their first year of Project Harmony who demonstrate the above guidelines may be able to take their instruments home sooner on a case-by-case basis with recommendation from their Project Harmony teacher.

*Returning students may be able to take their instruments as early as mid-October if they can properly demonstrate the above guidelines with approval from their Project Harmony teacher.