



19 Ginnie Lane, West Windsor, NJ 08550 • contactyocj@gmail.com

www.yocj.org

Student Handbook

Mission Statement

The mission of the Youth Orchestra of Central Jersey is to provide opportunities for talented young musicians in central New Jersey to participate in musical performance at a level beyond that which is traditionally offered by school bands and orchestras.

Orchestras and Ensembles

- String Preparatory Orchestra
- Pro Arte Orchestra
- Symphonic Orchestra
- Wind Symphony
- Brass Ensemble
- Brass Choir
- Saxophone Ensemble
- Saxophone Choir
- Saxophone Quartet
- Woodwind Choir
- Woodwind Chamber Players
- Flute Ensemble
- Flute Choir
- Percussion Ensemble

Seating and advancement are determined by seating auditions, individual performance, age and openings made available through graduation and/or attrition.

Membership

Requirements

In addition to taking private lessons, students must be members of their school orchestra or band in order to participate in YOCJ. Exceptions will be considered by the YOCJ directors only if students have an acceptable conflict precluding participation in the school music program, or if the school does not offer an instrumental music program. Membership is also open to homeschoolers.

Attendance

Every musician is important to the orchestra and regular attendance at rehearsals is required. All absences must be reported through the website at least 24 hours prior to the rehearsal time. Early notification allows the directors to plan their rehearsals efficiently and effectively. **A student may not miss more than three rehearsals per semester or it may affect the student's eligibility to perform that semester.**

Because of the importance of the dress rehearsal, scheduled on the Tuesday before the concert, students should make every effort to be present.

Performances at the following four concerts, in which your group is performing, are **MANDATORY**. (In addition, students are expected to attend the entire concert, not just the section in which they participate.)

Winter Small Ensemble and Large Ensemble Concert Spring Small Ensemble and Large Ensemble Concert

Students who miss a **MANDATORY** concert will be assessed a fee of \$50 which must be paid by the next rehearsal.

Expectations

Good attendance, appropriate behavior and serious commitment are necessary for the excellent performance of music. All students must behave responsibly and not endanger themselves, another student, or any musical instrument.

Music

All students are given music folders and music at the beginning of each semester. All music is the property of YOCJ and must be returned at the end of each concert or according to the instructions given by the conductor. Students are expected to keep music in good condition without tears, folds, ink or excessive pencil markings. Failure to do so will result in a replacement charge to the musician in the amount of \$10.00 per piece of damaged or lost music and in the amount of \$40 for damaged or lost music rented by YOCJ.

Disciplinary Action

At the discretion of the conductors, grounds for dismissal include the following:

- Failure to meet or maintain YOCJ requirements
- Failure to meet financial obligations
- Lack of musical preparation
- Excessive absences or an unexcused absence from a concert performance
- Disruptive or dangerous behavior or conduct reflecting unfavorably on YOCJ

Participation in YOCJ is at each person's own risk. YOCJ is not responsible for any injury to any student or instrument before, during or after any YOCJ event.

YOCJ is not responsible for any damage or loss of instruments, currency or personal property. Tuition shall not be refunded should any student decide to withdraw from YOCJ after the first two rehearsals of the season. If a student must withdraw from the orchestra within the first two rehearsals of the season, the Board will consider a refund of tuition after all music has been returned, less an administrative fee of \$50.00.

Concerts

YOCJ has two major Sunday concerts a year that involve most of the musicians: one the end of January and one the middle of May. Generally the SPO, PAO and Wind Symphony play at the 3:00pm concert. The Symphonic Orchestra and the Saxophone Choir perform at the 7:00pm concert. In addition, the 7 pm concert in May features one or more senior soloists, selected by audition, who each perform a concerto with the Symphonic Orchestra.

The ensemble groups, including the Brass Choir, Brass Ensemble, Saxophone Ensemble, Saxophone Quartet (Spring), Woodwind Choir, Woodwind Chamber Players, Flute Ensemble, Flute Choir, and Percussion Ensemble, perform in recitals close to the mid-point of each semester. This takes place in early December and the middle of April.

In early May, YOCJ usually has an annual, all-day trip to Ocean City, NJ which includes a concert at the Music Pier or the Ocean City Tabernacle, to showcase our musicians as well as promote camaraderie.

Concert Assessments

Concert Assessments will be held for all wind, brass and string students in advance of the concerts. It is the student's responsibility to prepare their YOCJ music with their private teachers. Concert participation, seating and future ensemble/section assignments will be determined by the Concert Assessments.

Unacceptable Concert Assessments

A student whose Concert Assessment is deemed unacceptable must re-audition within two weeks. If the re-audition is still unacceptable, the student will not be permitted to play the unacceptable pieces/sections in the concert. Students who demonstrate repeated unpreparedness may be dismissed from YOCJ. (Tuition will not be refunded for dismissed students.) Our goal is to teach the probationary musician acceptable standards of proper preparation for a YOCJ performance."

For Parents

We are pleased to announce our **Parent Volunteer Initiative!** As a nonprofit organization, YOCJ relies heavily upon parent volunteers in order to provide excellent musical training at a reasonable cost to our talented students. During the registration process, we organize parental support in facilitating set-up for rehearsals and in

running our many events. YOCJ requires that each *family* sign up for at least *two* volunteer duties **OR** your family may “buyout” of volunteer duty for a fee of **\$100.00** due at the time of registration. (Separate check from Tuition please.)

Examples of Volunteer Duties:

- New Student Auditions
- String Seating Auditions
- “Ensemble Parents”
- Tuesday Helping Hands
- Concert Set Up & Tear Down
- Ushers & Ticket Sales
- Social Parties Assistants
- Flower Sales, etc.

Our hope is that the implementation of this policy will continue provide YOCJ with consistent assistance in our many activities. YOCJ families can now contact us with your specific volunteer questions at: [**volunteer@yocj.org**](mailto:volunteer@yocj.org)

A **parent/student orientation meeting** is held each year before the season begins. An additional parent meeting will be held each semester during rehearsals, approximately one month prior to each concert.

Our **volunteer Board of Trustees** is composed of parents of current or former members of the orchestra. Please note that the organization depends largely on parental support to make this excellent orchestral training available at a reasonable cost to all qualified students. YOCJ is always looking for additional board members. If interested, please contact YOCJ at [**executivedirector@yocj.org**](mailto:executivedirector@yocj.org) or through the “contact us” page on the website: [**www.yocj.org**](http://www.yocj.org). The YOCJ board meets five times during the regular season and holds a Board “Retreat” during the summer for planning purposes.

Required Concert Attire

All groups EXCEPT Symphony and Saxophone Choir

Girls

- Solid, all-white opaque top with sleeves (no sleeveless tops and no bare midriffs)
- Long black opaque or fully lined skirt (no long or revealing slits), preferably ankle length but mid-calf is acceptable (skirt must be full enough so that it does not have to be pulled up to play the instrument)
- Black formal dress slacks may be worn. Pants must be full length (no cropped or tight pants)
- Black stockings/hosiery and black shoes (no sneakers or sandals)

Boys

- Solid, all-white long sleeve dress shirt
- Black bow tie
- Black dress slacks
- Black socks and black shoes (no sneakers or sandals)

Symphonic Orchestra & Saxophone Choir

Girls

- Same as above except all-black top with sleeves (no sleeveless tops and no bare midriffs)

Boys

- Tuxedo
- Solid, all-white long sleeve dress shirt
- Black bow tie
- Black dress slacks
- Black socks and black shoes (no sneakers or sandals)

Cancellations & Snow Closings

Please refer to the YOCJ homepage in the event of inclement weather. As a general rule, if the West Windsor-Plainsboro schools are closed or have an early dismissal, all evening rehearsals are cancelled.

YOCJ appreciates the support of:

