



www.yocj.org • contactyocj@gmail.com • executivedirector@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
- Symphonic Woodwinds
- 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.

Punctuality

Students are expected to demonstrate consistent punctuality to rehearsals. Conductors lose precious rehearsal time if students arrive late each week. YOCJ is a growing organization with over 200 students every semester! Plus, the parking lot of our rehearsal site is often VERY busy with their own evening activities. Parents need to plan accordingly in order for students to be on time.

*Students should be walking into the building **at least 10 minutes prior to their rehearsal**, so that they have sufficient time to unpack and warm up.

***Parents, if you are picking up students from the earlier rehearsal**, please consider parking in the lot instead of waiting at the curb, or at least pull forward as far as possible, making it easier for other parents to drop off their children in a timely manner.

***Parents, if you are dropping off students in front of WPHS North**, please carefully continue moving forward after your students have safely exited the car, so that the line of cars doesn't crawl with congestion.

***Parents, if you see that the drop off line is excessively long**, please consider parking in the lot, and walking your students up to the building using the crosswalk.

***Parents, please do not double park** behind a vehicle in the parking lot - please park your car properly to avoid congestion and blocking other cars from pulling out.

Expectations

All members of YOCJ are expected to come prepared with their music, pencil, and instruments at all rehearsals, concerts, summer camps and any other YOCJ related performances. 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

Liability

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

The annual tuition is always posted here: <https://yocj.org/about-yocj/tuition/>

YOCJ Tuition Assistance:

Tuition assistance is available and awarded to accepted YOCJ students with demonstrated financial need. Inquiries must be sent to YOCJ prior to the start of the Fall semester or Spring semester. Please email Mr. Pugh and Mrs. Epps at contactyocj@gmail.com and executivedirector@yocj.org for more information.

YOCJ Tuition Refund Policy:

The YOCJ season runs from October – May. 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 within the first two rehearsals, the Board will consider a refund of tuition after all music has been returned, less an administrative fee of \$50.

Concerts

YOCJ has two major 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 evening concert, which may be 7:30pm or 8pm. In addition, the evening concert in May features one or more senior soloists, selected by audition, who each perform a concerto with the Symphonic Orchestra.

The small ensemble groups, including the Brass Choir, Brass Ensemble, Saxophone Ensemble, Saxophone Quartet (Spring), Woodwind Choir, Flute Choir, and Percussion Ensemble, (and sometimes the Symphonic Woodwinds) perform in concerts close to the mid-point of each semester. This takes place in December and April.

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 continue 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 beginning of each semester, we organize parental support in facilitating set-up for rehearsals and in running our many events.

*YOCJ requires that each **full-year family** sign up for **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.)

*YOCJ requires that each **Spring-only family** sign up for **one** volunteer duties **OR** your family may "buyout" of volunteer duty for a fee of **\$50.00** due at the beginning of the semester. (Separate check from Tuition please.)

*YOCJ tracks the volunteer efforts and/or Buyout payments of each family.

*We ask for advanced notice if you will have to miss your volunteer opportunity so we can plan accordingly.

*If you must miss, we ask that you sign up for another duty and notify us of the new date.

*If we reach the end of the season, and you have NOT completed your Volunteer requirement, we

ask that you make the appropriate buyout payment.

*Families who have an outstanding buyout payment will NOT be able to register for YOCJ the following season, until they have settled the buyout from the previous season.

Examples of Volunteer Duties:

- New Student Auditions
- String Seating Auditions
- 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

A **parent/student orientation meeting** is held each year before the season begins. Often, an additional parent meeting might be held each semester during rehearsals, prior to each concert.

Our **volunteer Board of Trustees** is composed of parents of current 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 or through the “contact us” page on the website: www.yocj.org. The YOCJ board meets five times during the regular season and often holds a Board “Retreat” during the summer for planning purposes.

Required Concert Attire

YOCJ concert attire is all-black for all students.

Options are as follows:

1A. Long-sleeved black blouse/dress shirt with black dress pants/long skirt (floor- or ankle-length). Black ties optional.

OR

1B. Floor- or ankle-length black dress (with sleeves)

AND

2. Black dress shoes (closed-toe, no sandals) with long black dress socks/stockings

Cancellations & Snow Closings

Please refer to the YOCJ homepage in the event of inclement weather. Additionally, you will either receive a mass email with cancellation information, a Remind App notification (if you have signed up), or both.

YOCJ appreciates the support of:

