

Harmony

2025-26 Family Handbook

Harmony is a program of the Greater Twin Cities Youth Symphonies (GTCYS) in partnership with Riverview Spanish/English Dual Immersion Program and L'Etoile du Nord French Immersion School



Harmony Phone: 651.602.6809 | Email: emily@gtcys.org
www.gtcys.org/programs/harmony

Table of Contents

Welcome Letter.....	1
Harmony Staff and Teaching Artists.....	2-3
Communication	4
About Harmony and Harmony Values	5
Harmony Class Structure	6
Performing in Community!	7
Behavior Expectations and Consequence Ladder.....	8
Harmony Tuition.....	9
Instruments and Materials.....	10
Family Involvement.....	11
2025-26 Calendars	12-13
Attendance Policy.....	14
Continuing After Harmony.....	15
About GTCYS	16
Policy for Child Protection.....	17-19

WELCOME!

Dear Harmony Families,

Welcome to Harmony, part of the Greater Twin Cities Youth Symphonies (GTCYS, pronounced git-seez)! We're so glad you've chosen to learn violin or cello with us through Harmony, GTCYS' strings program in partnership with Riverview and L'Etoile du Nord schools. Harmony gives students the chance to learn an instrument, make music together, and develop skills that go far beyond the classroom.

Harmony members are also part of the larger GTCYS community—11 orchestras with over 900 young musicians (many of whom started in Harmony!) ages 7–18 from all over the Twin Cities. Our hope is that your experience here will inspire you to keep playing and eventually join one of our school-year orchestras. Later this season, you'll even get to connect and perform with GTCYS orchestra members.

This year in Harmony will be fun, challenging, and rewarding. It also comes with responsibility: by signing up, students and families commit to “playing your part,” living out Harmony's values, and working hard to do your best. This handbook outlines what to expect and how we'll work together to help every student succeed.

We're excited to make music with you this year! If you have any questions, please reach out to us anytime using the contact info below.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Meggen Balda". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Meggen" and the last name "Balda" clearly visible.

Megen Balda
Executive Director

Harmony **Riverview**

Staff and Teaching Artists



Laurie McFaul
Harmony Director & Lead Roots Instructor
laurie@gtcys.org
651-876-1678



Emily Doyle
Harmony Manager & Violin Instructor
emily@gtcys.org
651-602-6809



Olivia Quintanilla
Lead Cello Instructor
olivia@gtcys.org



Irene Pardo
Violin Instructor
irene@gtcys.org
¡Hablo español!



Omar Macias
Cello Instructor
omar@gtcys.org
¡Hablo español!



Hansel Perez Carrero
Violin Instructor
hansel@gtcys.org
¡Hablo español!

Harmony **L'Etoile du Nord**

Staff and Teaching Artists



Laurie McFaul
Harmony Director & Lead Roots Instructor
laurie@gtcys.org
651-876-1678



Emily Doyle
Harmony Manager & Violin Instructor
emily@gtcys.org
651-602-6809



Joe Kaiser
Cello Instructor
joe@gtcs.org



Irene Pardo
Violin Instructor
irene@gtcys.org



Denise Hernández
Cello Instructor
denise@gtcys.org

COMMUNICATION

Communication between school staff, Harmony program staff, students, and their families is essential. **If you are running late or have another transportation issue, please call or text Harmony Manager Emily Doyle: (651) 602- 6809.**

We use the following forms of communication:

- **Harmony Member Page:**
 - **The Harmony Member Page includes important links to any information you might need, including the calendar, Absence Form, this handbook, and the Harmony YouTube page.**
 - We also post all the weekly Harmony emails on the Member Page!
 - To access the Harmony Member Page, go to <https://gtcys.org/members> and click on your Harmony program.
 - The **password** to access the Harmony Member Page is **harmony25-26**
- **Email:**
 - **Harmony updates come by email, so it's important to read and reply to messages.** Please check your emails regularly.
 - **Email is the best way to contact Harmony staff and is our primary means of communication.** If you are not receiving regular communications from Harmony, please contact Emily at emily@gtcys.org to ensure that we have the correct contact information on file.
- **Phone:** We also use phone calls and texts to contact families directly. You may hear from Harmony staff and teachers throughout the year.
- **Flyers:** We will occasionally send home printed flyers with important information. Check your child's backpack!

Questions

If you ever have questions or feedback about Harmony, please contact Harmony Manager Emily Doyle or Harmony Director Laurie McFaul.

Creating stronger learners, building confidence, and opening new doors through music

What is Harmony?

Now in its tenth year, **Harmony** is an extra-curricular year-round strings program that gives kids the chance to learn violin or cello in a fun, supportive setting—while also using music to build confidence, teamwork, and leadership skills that carry into school and everyday life.

Inspired by Venezuela’s El Sistema, Harmony prioritizes excellence and access through before-school classes taught by a team of amazing teaching artists. Today, about 100 students in grades 2–5 take part at Riverview Spanish/English Dual Immersion School on the West Side of St. Paul and L’Etoile du Nord French Immersion School on the East Side of St. Paul. What makes Harmony special is how it opens the door to GTCYS’ 11 school-year orchestras, helping students grow musically all the way through 12th grade. This year, more than 40 Harmony graduates are continuing their musical journey in GTCYS orchestras, with ongoing support for free instruments, tuition help, and private lessons. As Harmony grows, so will our vision for what we can achieve together!

Harmony Values

In Harmony, we focus on the values of Community, Joy, Kindness, Courage, and Effort

Community is sharing who you are within Harmony, with your school, and where you live. As a community, Harmony shares with one another in class, with our partner schools, and through local performances.

Joy is how we feel when we make music and learn together in community. It’s also having fun at Harmony!

Kindness is having a good attitude towards others and yourself. It also means offering help to others and asking for help when you need it.

Courage is making brave choices, even when you feel unsure or nervous. It takes courage to use a new skill with your classmates and in front of an audience!

Effort is putting in the work to learn new things both in class and at home. It’s about trying your best, even when you make mistakes.



Harmony Classes

Where: Harmony classes are at school. When they arrive, students gather as a community in the cafeteria before lining up to go to class.

When: Students arrive at school between 7:50 and 8:00am. Class starts promptly at 8:00 and ends at 9:15. At 9:15am, students walk to the breakfast line together.

Class Structure

Most days, Harmony students learn together as part of a “small group” class. Once each week, there are “big-group” classes with students from across the Harmony program.

- First-time Harmony Students – “Harmony Roots”
 - For the first semester, new Harmony students will learn together in a program called Harmony Roots, where they will focus on general music skills and instrument exploration. In early December, they will choose between violin or cello. After December, the Roots schedule includes small-group class on their chosen instrument and participating in big-group class with returning students.
 - Harmony Roots is designed for 2nd and 3rd graders. First-time 4th grade students will be placed in a class that makes sense for them.
- Returning Harmony Students
 - Two mornings each week, students will learn in small-group classes. One morning each week, they will participate in big-group class.



Performing in Community!

Harmony students will have various performances throughout the year, some at school and others in the greater Twin Cities community (see schedule below for dates). **Participating in these performances is mandatory** and families must inform teachers beforehand if they are unable to attend.

Check your school's calendar for 2025-26 concert dates!

Concert Attire:

- For most performances, students wear **black on top and black on bottom.**
 - Top: Black ¾ to long sleeved black shirt (elbow-length or longer)
 - Bottom: Long black dress slacks OR floor- or ankle-length black skirt (not form-fitting)
 - Socks: Black socks or tights
 - Shoes: Black dress shoes (no open toes, sandals, or sneakers)
- For some performances, students will wear their school clothes or their Harmony t-shirt (provided).



Reserving Tickets for Harmony Performances

Most Harmony concerts are free. For ticketed concerts at which their students are performing (like Spring Festival at Orchestra Hall), GTCYS will provide Harmony families with a code to reserve 2 free tickets; additional tickets will be available for purchase. Information will be available in weekly emails and on your Harmony Member Page.



Cinco de Mayo Performance



Playing for the Breakfast Line

Harmony Behavior Expectations

Harmony Community Mantra:

"I am responsible for my words, actions and instrument"

As a GTCYS program, Harmony students are expected to follow their school's expectations for classroom behavior and **GTCYS Expectations and Conduct** policies.

At Harmony, that looks like:

- Following your teachers' instructions
- Speaking respectfully to your fellow students, teachers, and staff
- Taking care of your instrument, music and accessories
- Only touching or writing on things that belong to you
- Keeping food and beverages out of classroom and performance spaces
- Making sure cell phones and other devices are off and out of sight during all program activities

Consequence ladder

Harmony will follow the Consequence Ladder below for any "Minor Infractions" during Harmony activities. For more serious behaviors, or "Major Infractions," the response will start at Step 3 of the Consequence Ladder. The Consequence Ladder helps set clear expectations with students so we can help them be successful in Harmony!

Minor Infractions Include:

- Touching other students without permission
- Talking back to teachers
- Speaking out of turn, joking, or laughing during teaching time
- Failure to follow expectations and procedures during designated bathroom breaks, rehearsal set up and dismissal
- Running with an instrument
- Doodling on or crumpling sheet music

Major Infractions Include:

- Leaving the room without permission
- Intentionally damaging instruments or resources
- Physical or emotional altercations
- Hitting another student
- Intentionally provoking another student
- Bullying another child or intentionally hurting their feelings

Consequence Ladder steps:
1. Teachers will give 3 reminders per class for students to follow classroom expectations
2. After 3 reminders, the student will take a 5-minute break in a designated break area in the room.
3. If behavior continues after a 5-minute break, the teacher will ask the student to take a break in another teacher's classroom. The family will be contacted to set up a conference with Harmony staff, and the student will be required to sign a behavior contract. Students will not be allowed to rejoin Harmony classes until a conference is held and the behavior contract is signed.
4. If steps 1-3 are repeated, students will received a one-week suspension from Harmony and an updated behavior contract will be signed.
5. If the above process is repeated, a call will be arranged to determine the future of this student's participation in Harmony.

Harmony Tuition Information

Our hope with the Tuition Tiers is to share a small portion of Harmony's costs in a way that is still equitable and flexible for families, while also ensuring that Harmony remains strong for years to come. While the actual cost to participate in Harmony is more than \$2,500 per student, GTCYS is committed to keeping the fee as affordable as possible.

The recommendations below are based on total household income. This is on the honor system, and documentation isn't needed to verify income.

Tuition Tiers:

- **Tier 1:** \$25 for the whole school year *Recommended for families with total household incomes less than \$45,000*
- **Tier 2:** \$100 for the whole school year (or 5 monthly payments of \$20) *Recommended for families with total household incomes between \$45,000 – \$54,999*
- **Tier 3:** \$250 for the whole school year (or 5 monthly payments of \$50) *Recommended for families with household incomes totaling between \$55,000 – \$79,000*
- **Tier 4:** \$500 for the whole school year (or 5 monthly payments of \$100) *Recommended for families with household incomes totaling \$80,000 or more*

Important Note: We want every interested student to be able to participate in Harmony regardless of finances, so if the fee is prohibitive for your family there is an option to waive it and pay \$0 for participation in Harmony.

Instruments and Materials

GTCYS will provide each student with:

- A violin or cello
- Sheet music / notebook
- Accessories (bow, strings, rosin)
- A sharpened pencil with a good eraser

Instrument Loan Agreement

GTCYS provides Harmony musicians with instruments on loan for the school year. Students may bring their instrument home once they've shown they can take good care of it.

- Families are responsible for:
 - Taking care of the instrument.
 - Returning it at the end of the school year.
 - Covering the cost of replacement if the instrument or accessories are lost, stolen, altered, or damaged beyond repair.
- Musicians are expected to:
 - Treat their own instrument with care.
 - Respect other students' instruments and property.
- Families agree to these conditions by signing the instrument loan agreement in the Harmony registration form.

Instrument Care

I love my instrument! How should I take care of it?

- Always put your instrument away in its case when you are done playing. Violins should remove the sponge or shoulder rest before placing the violin in its case. Cellos should put their end pin in.
- Loosen your bow before putting it away – remember not to touch the horsehair!
- Do not leave your instrument in the car, or anywhere else it could experience extremes of temperature.
- Only students and their parents or guardians should ever touch or play the instrument.

Instrument Repairs

If your instrument needs supplies or repair, bring the instrument and any parts to your next class and notify one of the teaching artists. Do not try to repair the instrument yourself (even if the bridge falls off) as this may result in more damage. Accidents happen and we will work with families to fix the instrument.

Practice time is essential for student success!

Once students start taking their instruments home (usually around winter break), they are expected to establish a daily practice routine. Playing at home will help students learn faster and get to play more music!

Family Involvement

Families are important partners in their musician's participation and development through GTCYS' programs. Musicians' success is the result of dedicated families who help their students understand the importance of practicing, being on time and contributing to their communities.

Volunteering

We welcome the help of family members! Assisting at special events, encouraging community members to attend concerts, and providing expertise are great ways to share your time and knowledge. Contact Emily Doyle for more information or keep an eye out for opportunities in Harmony's weekly emails.

Encourage Your Student to Play at Home!

Regardless of musical background, a parent or guardian's encouragement will impact a child's progress. You'll be amazed at your student's progress if you follow these tips!

- Facilitate regular practice: provide a daily time and quiet place where your child can practice without distractions or interruptions.
- Encourage musicians to practice slowly and then increase speed
- Practice with the [YouTube videos](#), as well as with the music that students have been given in class
- Encourage small performances: In addition to Harmony performances, encourage your child to play for you, your family, and friends at home or family gatherings
- Get Involved! Enthusiastically attend Harmony events to show your support. You are welcome to attend a Harmony class to see what your child is learning and encourage those concepts at home.



2025-26 HARMONY RIVERVIEW SCHEDULE

All activities are at Riverview Spanish / English Dual Immersion unless otherwise noted

Thurs.	October 9	6:30-7:30pm	HARMONY ORIENTATION
Tues.	October 14	8:00-9:15am	Class
Wed.	October 15	8:00-9:15am	Class
Thurs.	October 16	NO SCHOOL (MEA)	
Tues.	October 21	8:00-9:15am	Class
Wed.	October 22	8:00-9:15am	Class
Thurs.	October 23	8:00-9:15am	Class
Tues.	October 28	8:00-9:15am	Class
Wed.	October 29	8:00-9:15am	Class
Thurs.	October 30	8:00-9:15am	Class
Tues.	November 4	8:00-9:15am	Class
Wed.	November 5	8:00-9:15am	Class
Thurs.	November 6	8:00-9:15am	Class
Tues.	November 11	8:00-9:15am	Class
Wed.	November 12	8:00-9:15am	Class
Thurs.	November 13	8:00-9:15am	Class
Tues.	November 18	8:00-9:15am	Class
Wed.	November 19	8:00-9:15am	Class
Thurs.	November 20	8:00-9:15am	Class
Tues.	November 25	8:00-9:15am	Class
Wed.	November 26	8:00-9:15am	Class
Thurs.	November 27	NO SCHOOL (Thanksgiving)	
Tues.	December 2	8:00-9:15am	Class
Wed.	December 3	8:00-9:15am	Class
Thurs.	December 4	8:00-9:15am	Class
Tues.	December 9	8:00-9:15am	Class
Wed.	December 10	8:00-9:15am	Class
Thurs.	December 11	8:00-9:15am	Class
Tues.	December 16	8:00-9:15am	Class
Wed.	December 17	8:00-9:15am	Class
Thurs.	December 18	8:00-9:15am	Class
December 22-January 2 NO SCHOOL (Winter Break)			
Tues.	January 6	8:00-9:15am	Class
Wed.	January 7	8:00-9:15am	Class
Thurs.	January 8	8:00-9:15am	Class
Tues.	January 13	8:00-9:15am	Class
Wed.	January 14	8:00-9:15am	Class
Thurs.	January 15	8:00-9:15am	Class
Tues.	January 20	8:00-9:15am	Class
Wed.	January 21	8:00-9:15am	Class
Thurs.	January 22	8:00-9:15am	Class
Tues.	January 27	8:00-9:15am	Class
Wed.	January 28	8:00-9:15am	Class
Thurs.	January 29	8:00-9:15am	Class
Tues.	February 3	8:00-9:15am	Class
Wed.	February 4	8:00-9:15am	Class
Thurs.	February 5	8:00-9:15am	Class

Tues.	February 10	8:00-9:15am	Class
Wed.	February 11	8:00-9:15am	Class
Thurs.	February 12	8:00-9:15am	Class
Tues.	February 17	8:00-9:15am	Class
Wed.	February 18	8:00-9:15am	Class
Thurs.	February 19	8:00-9:15am	Class
Sun. February 22 CONCERT – Orchestrating Opportunities at Orchestra Hall (concert at 3:30pm)			
Tues.	February 24	8:00-9:15am	Class
Wed.	February 25	8:00-9:15am	Class
Thurs.	February 26	8:00-9:15am	Class
Sat. February 28 CONCERT with CoMUSICation at Two Rivers High School (concert at 10:30am)			
Tues.	March 3	8:00-9:15am	Class
Wed.	March 4	8:00-9:15am	Class
Thurs.	March 5	8:00-9:15am	Class
Tues.	March 10	8:00-9:15am	Class
Wed.	March 11	8:00-9:15am	Class
Thurs.	March 12	8:00-9:15am	Class
Tues.	March 17	8:00-9:15am	Class
Wed.	March 18	8:00-9:15am	Class
Thurs.	March 19	8:00-9:15am	Class
Tues.	March 24	8:00-9:15am	Class
Wed.	March 25	8:00-9:15am	Class
Thurs.	March 26	8:00-9:15am	Class
Tues.	March 31	8:00-9:15am	Class
Wed.	April 1	8:00-9:15am	Class
Thurs.	April 2	8:00-9:15am	Class
April 3 – 10 NO SCHOOL (Spring Break)			
Tues.	April 14	8:00-9:15am	Class
Wed.	April 15	8:00-9:15am	Class
Thurs.	April 16	8:00-9:15am	Class
Tues.	April 21	8:00-9:15am	Class
Wed.	April 22	8:00-9:15am	Class
Thurs.	April 23	8:00-9:15am	Class
Tues.	April 28	8:00-9:15am	Class
Wed.	April 29	8:00-9:15am	Class
Thurs.	April 30	8:00-9:15am	Class
Sat. May 2 CONCERT at the Westside Cinco de Mayo Festival (time tbc)			
Tues.	May 5	8:00-9:15am	Class
Wed.	May 6	8:00-9:15am	Class
Thurs.	May 7	8:00-9:15am	Class
Sun. May 10 CONCERT – GTCYS Spring Festival at Orchestra Hall (concert at 3:30pm)			
Tues.	May 12	8:00-9:15am	Class
Wed.	May 13	8:00-9:15am	Class
Thurs.	May 14	8:00-9:15am	Last Day of Class!

2025-26 HARMONY L'ETOILE DU NORD SCHEDULE

All activities are at L'Etoile du Nord French Immersion School unless otherwise noted

Thurs.	October 9	4:30-5:30pm	HARMONY ORIENTATION
Mon.	October 13	8:00-9:15am	Class
Wed.	October 15	8:00-9:15am	Class
Fri.	October 17	NO SCHOOL (MEA)	
Mon.	October 20	8:00-9:15am	Class
Wed.	October 22	8:00-9:15am	Class
Fri.	October 24	8:00-9:15am	Class
Mon.	October 27	8:00-9:15am	Class
Wed.	October 29	8:00-9:15am	Class
Fri.	October 31	NO SCHOOL	
Mon.	November 3	8:00-9:15am	Class
Wed.	November 5	8:00-9:15am	Class
Fri.	November 7	NO SCHOOL	
Mon.	November 10	8:00-9:15am	Class
Wed.	November 12	8:00-9:15am	Class
Fri.	November 14	8:00-9:15am	Class
Mon.	November 17	8:00-9:15am	Class
Wed.	November 19	8:00-9:15am	Class
Fri.	November 21	8:00-9:15am	Class
Mon.	November 24	8:00-9:15am	Class
Wed.	November 26	8:00-9:15am	Class
Fri.	November 28	NO SCHOOL (Thanksgiving)	
Mon.	December 1	8:00-9:15am	Class
Wed.	December 3	8:00-9:15am	Class
Fri.	December 5	8:00-9:15am	Class
Mon.	December 8	8:00-9:15am	Class
Wed.	December 10	8:00-9:15am	Class
Fri.	December 12	8:00-9:15am	Class
Mon.	December 15	8:00-9:15am	Class
Wed.	December 17	8:00-9:15am	Class
Fri.	December 19	8:00-9:15am	Class
December 22-January 2 NO SCHOOL (Winter Break)			
Mon.	January 5	8:00-9:15am	Class
Wed.	January 7	8:00-9:15am	Class
Fri.	January 9	8:00-9:15am	Class
Mon.	January 12	8:00-9:15am	Class
Wed.	January 14	8:00-9:15am	Class
Fri.	January 16	8:00-9:15am	Class
Mon.	January 29	8:00-9:15am	Class
Wed.	January 21	8:00-9:15am	Class
Fri.	January 23	8:00-9:15am	Class
Mon.	January 26	8:00-9:15am	Class
Wed.	January 28	8:00-9:15am	Class
Fri.	January 30	NO SCHOOL	

Mon.	February 2	8:00-9:15am	Class
Wed.	February 4	8:00-9:15am	Class
Fri.	February 6	8:00-9:15am	Class
Mon.	February 9	8:00-9:15am	Class
Wed.	February 11	8:00-9:15am	Class
Fri.	February 13	8:00-9:15am	Class
Mon.	February 16	NO SCHOOL – President's Day	
Wed.	February 18	8:00-9:15am	Class
Fri.	February 20	8:00-9:15am	Class
Mon.	February 23	8:00-9:15am	Class
Wed.	February 25	8:00-9:15am	Class
Fri.	February 27	8:00-9:15am	Class
Sat. February 28 CONCERT at Two Rivers High School (concert at 2:00pm)			
Mon.	March 2	8:00-9:15am	Class
Wed.	March 4	8:00-9:15am	Class
Fri.	March 6	8:00-9:15am	Class
Mon.	March 9	8:00-9:15am	Class
Wed.	March 11	8:00-9:15am	Class
Fri.	March 13	8:00-9:15am	Class
Mon.	March 16	8:00-9:15am	Class
Wed.	March 18	8:00-9:15am	Class
Fri.	March 20	NO SCHOOL	
Mon.	March 23	8:00-9:15am	Class
Wed.	March 25	8:00-9:15am	Class
Fri.	March 27	8:00-9:15am	Class
Mon.	March 30	8:00-9:15am	Class
Wed.	April 1	8:00-9:15am	Class
Fri.	April 3	NO SCHOOL	
April 6 – 10 NO SCHOOL (Spring Break)			
Mon.	April 13	8:00-9:15am	Class
Wed.	April 15	8:00-9:15am	Class
Fri.	April 17	8:00-9:15am	Class
Mon.	April 20	8:00-9:15am	Class
Wed.	April 22	8:00-9:15am	Class
Fri.	April 24	8:00-9:15am	Class
Fri.	April 24	POSSIBLE CONCERT (during the school day)	
Mon.	April 27	8:00-9:15am	Class
Wed.	April 29	8:00-9:15am	Class
Fri.	May 1	8:00-9:15am	Class
Mon.	May 4	8:00-9:15am	Class
Wed.	May 6	8:00-9:15am	Class
Fri.	May 8	8:00-9:15am	Class
Sun. May 10 CONCERT – GTCYS Spring Festival at Orchestra Hall (concert at 3:30pm)			
Mon.	May 11	8:00-9:15am	Class
Wed.	May 13	8:00-9:15am	Class
Fri.	May 15	8:00-9:15am	Last Day of Class!

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Harmony is a community of musicians, each of whom is equally important to the group's progress and success. Harmony students should honor their commitment by consistently attending all Harmony activities. This means families should:

- Subscribe to your Harmony's calendar to understand the schedule
- Plan ahead to attend rehearsals, retreats, and concerts
- Complete an online [Harmony Absence Form](#) as soon you know you'll miss a Harmony activity

Absence limits: A limited number of absences are allotted as described here:

- Semester 1 (October through the last activity in December): **4 absences**
- Semester 2 (January through the May concert): **5 absences**

What happens when Harmony students need to be absent?

1. Complete the [Harmony Absence Form](#) as soon as you are aware that you will miss a GTCYS activity for any reason. Anticipating accurate attendance is crucial for teachers to plan their classes.
2. If students accrue more than allowed absences, they may be asked to meet with the Harmony Manager and/or Director to create an attendance plan for the remainder of the year.

Promptness: Harmony students should arrive between 7:50 and 8:00am on class days so that we can start class promptly at 8:00am!

Harmony Concerts: Performances are required, and each student must prioritize attendance at these important events. Absences negatively impact the experience of that student and the full group.

Illness: Students should stay home if they are ill, according to SPPS's [Health Guidance for Going to School](#). Please keep in mind that we do *not* have a nurse on site to care for your student if they are too ill to participate in class. In the case of longer-term illness, injury, or mental health situation, an extended medical leave can be arranged.

Weather cancellations: Harmony follows the SPPS district calendar and cancels rehearsals when SPPS cancels school. The district typically makes decisions regarding cancellations by at latest 5:00am the morning of, but sometimes in extreme weather will sometimes decide the evening before. In the event of cancellation, Harmony will email all families and will post a notification on the Harmony calendar and website. It is parents' responsibility to check their email and GTCYS' website for announcements.

Emergency Procedures: Harmony staff are aware of school policies in case of emergency and will follow the appropriate procedures if needed.

CONTINUING AFTER HARMONY

After graduating from Harmony at the end of 5th grade, students will have many opportunities to continue playing violin or cello in GTCYS' school-year orchestras, in middle school orchestra programs, and/or private lessons.

GTCYS School-Year Orchestras

We hope every Harmony graduate will audition for GTCYS' Philharmonia East string orchestra. Orchestra includes weekly rehearsals (typically Tuesday nights), social activities, and performances with students from all over the cities.

Harmony alumni in GTCYS Orchestras can continue to borrow an instrument and are required to take private lessons, paid for by GTCYS (see below). You will also be eligible for need-based tuition assistance (with a required application) and reduced-priced concert tickets.

Harmony alumni will audition each year to advance through GTCYS' orchestra levels. Eventually, we hope you will be part of Symphony (the most advanced orchestra) with international touring opportunities. Playing an instrument also opens doors for college scholarships and beyond.

GTCYS is committed to access and excellence in music education! With interest, dedication, and family support, Harmony Alumni can progress through the GTCYS orchestra levels at a very low financial cost to your family.

Sponsored Lessons

Harmony students and graduates who are accepted into Philharmonia qualify for the GTCYS Sponsored Lessons Program. GTCYS Lessons students receive regular private or small-group lessons from a professional violin or cello teacher. Lessons help students improve technique, learn new repertoire, and build skills to advance in Orchestra. There is a \$35 participation fee for the year, and parents must commit to taking students to lessons and ensure practice at home.

Middle School Orchestra Programs

We hope your student will also continue to play music in their school programs! There are a wide range of string programs in SPPS middle schools – schools that currently have programs include: Capitol Hill, Murray Middle School, Ramsey, Washington Tech, Farnsworth Upper, Magnet, Highland Park Middle, Parkway Middle, Creative Arts, Washington Technology School, and Highland Park Middle.

ABOUT GTCYS

Mission

In the conviction that music nourishes the mind, body, and spirit of the individual and enriches the community, the Greater Twin Cities Youth Symphonies (GTCYS) provides a rigorous and inspiring orchestral experience for young musicians.

Access to Excellence

GTCYS students learn the importance of community engagement and understand that music is most powerful and life-changing when it is shared. Students share their talents through 30 free and ticketed performances across the Twin Cities.

Sharing Music

GTCYS is committed to both excellence and access. Our educational programs serve more than 1,400 students ages 7–18, meeting them at their musical level and inspiring them to excel musically and build lifelong skills.

Breaking Down Barriers

To level the playing field, students will benefit from more than \$300,000 in need-based scholarships for tuition and private lessons this year. Our community of donors helps create opportunities for every interested student. Learn more at gtcys.org.

GTCYS' Orchestras

Harmony students develop skills on their instruments with the hope of joining one of GTCYS' 11 school-year orchestras. These orchestras, which rehearse weekly and perform multiple times during the year, include string, woodwind, brass, and percussion students who audition each year and are placed by ability in orchestras that range from beginning to pre-professional:

- **Philharmonia East/West:** entry-level strings-only orchestras for students with 2-4 years' experience
- **Sinfonia East/West:** full orchestra for string, woodwind, brass, and percussion students with 2-5 years' experience
- **Concertino East/West:** an intermediate orchestra for students with 2-7 years' experience
- **Camerata Con Brio/Camerata Vivace:** intermediate orchestras for students with 3-7 years' experience
- **Concert:** an advanced orchestra for students with 4-8 years' experience
- **Philharmonic:** a highly advanced orchestra for students with 5-10 years' experience
- **Symphony:** a pre-professional orchestra for students with 5-12 years' experience

GTCYS also offers summer camps for beginning to advanced musicians. Harmony students have the opportunity to audition for camp each spring.

Greater Twin Cities Youth Symphonies Child Protection Policy

The Greater Twin Cities Youth Symphonies (“GTCYS”) seeks to ensure that young musicians who participate in any GTCYS programs may do so without fear of abuse. GTCYS seeks to create an environment of awareness and prevention, where those involved in administering GTCYS programs act in a manner that minimizes any opportunities for abuse to occur, and where allegations that may arise are addressed promptly.

Therefore, we, the Board of Directors of GTCYS, reaffirm this Policy for Child Protection this 26th day of August 2024.

Policy for Child Protection

1. For purposes of this policy, “adult” means any person 18 years of age or older.
2. Adult employees, contractors and volunteers of GTCYS who regularly work with students or other minors must meet the following qualifications:
 - a. Successfully clear a background check review (including criminal history and the National Sex Offender database checks) upon appointment and approximately every 2 years thereafter; and
 - b. Review, agree to abide by, and sign this policy.

The Executive Director will review all positions and identify those that must meet some or all of the above qualifications. Those positions that are subject to these prerequisites include, but are not limited to, conductors, regular coaches, specialists, tour chaperones, and interns. Adult employees, contractors and volunteers of GTCYS may also be required to participate in training sessions.

3. Short-term adult contractors or volunteers for whom it is not practicable to complete a background check must review and agree to abide by this policy. Any such individuals should be supervised by a GTCYS representative who has met the full qualifications set forth in Section 2 above. 2
4. For the protection of GTCYS, its students, staff, volunteers and contractors, adult individuals who work with GTCYS students will attempt to avoid potentially compromising situations in which abuse could occur and/or an allegation of abuse could arise. GTCYS promotes a “Rule of Three” culture where staff, volunteers and contractors are encouraged to avoid situations where one student or other minor is alone with one adult employee, contractor or volunteer.

When performing work on behalf of GTCYS, adult employees, contractors and volunteers should avoid situations where they are alone with a single student or other minor (unless the GTCYS employee, contractor or volunteer is the minor’s parent or other relative). If situations arise when this is not possible (e.g., a

parent is late to pick up a student after rehearsal and there are no other GTCYS representatives or students present), then the employee, contractor or volunteer should take precautions to remain in an open public area with the student or other minor. In any such circumstances, adult employees, contractors and volunteers of GTCYS should be in an observable location and at an interruptible distance by another adult.

Any adult individuals who have not met the full qualifications set forth in Section 2 above must strictly follow this "Rule of Three," and under no circumstances should they be alone with a single student or other minor (unless the individual is the minor's parent or other relative).

5. Minors involved in coaching, or otherwise engaging as a GTCYS employee, contractor, or volunteer, with GTCYS students will be supervised by a GTCYS representative who has met the full qualifications set forth in Section 2 above to confirm they are acting in a manner consistent with this policy including leading any instruction in a rehearsal space or area equipped with a window or open door.
6. With the exception of activities involving their own children or other relatives, or apart from conducting official GTCYS business, adult employees, contractors and volunteers of GTCYS should not instigate or maintain a personal relationship with any GTCYS student in any form including on any social media platforms. All contact with GTCYS students outside of rehearsals, performances, tours or other GTCYS' events should be initiated through the student's parent/guardian so that the parent/guardian is aware of the circumstances surrounding the communications.
7. GTCYS employees, volunteers and contractors should examine rehearsal, retreat, concert and other venues for GTCYS programs and activities to address potential areas of concern. This might include areas with doors that lock; doors that do not have windows that would permit individuals outside to view activities inside the room; dark, out-of-the-way places, such as remote staircases; and areas created to promote privacy such as restrooms, bathing facilities, changing rooms and locker rooms. Windows to rooms should remain uncovered. 3 When appropriate, doors should remain propped open. GTCYS employees, volunteers and contractors are encouraged to engage in "drop-ins" to ensure compliance with the policy.
8. GTCYS requires its employees and contractors to be familiar with the Reporting of Maltreatment of Minors laws in Minnesota (see Minnesota Statutes Chapter 260E at <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/260E>), which mandates, in certain circumstances, reporting of possible abuse of minors. Any GTCYS employee or contractor who knows or has reason to know that a student or other minor has been subjected to physical or sexual abuse in the last three years— regardless of whether the abuse occurred in connection with a GTCYS program or activity – should immediately (as soon as possible, but in no event longer than 24 hours) report such information to (1) local law enforcement if the child is in immediate danger or, if the child is not in immediate danger to the local welfare agency, policy department, county sheriff or other appropriate governmental agency; and (2) the Executive Director.

9. In the event that GTCYS receives an allegation of abuse of a minor or GTCYS becomes aware of any incident in which there is a concern for the safety or well-being of a student or other minor under the supervision of GTCYS, GTCYS will immediately report any such information to appropriate governmental agencies, to the extent required under Minnesota law. GTCYS may also independently conduct an investigation into any such matter and, if appropriate, involve law enforcement and/or child protection services. GTCYS reserves the right to take interim protective measures to ensure the safety of GTCYS' students while an investigation is pending. GTCYS will strive to conduct its investigation in a manner that respects the privacy and confidentiality of the individuals involved in the investigation.
10. In addition to prohibiting abuse of minors, this policy prohibits any retaliation against employees, contractors, volunteers, students and parents/guardians for making a good faith report under this policy and for participating in an investigation into allegations of abuse.
11. This policy will be disseminated to all parents and students in the students' handbooks. It will also be presented to GTCYS employees, contractors and volunteers (including members of GTCYS' Board of Directors) annually.

