

**Yakima Youth Symphony Orchestra (YYSO) & Yakima Ensemble for Strings (YES!)
Student and Parent Handbook**

Introduction

Welcome to YYSO and YES! Established in 1965, the Yakima Youth Symphony Orchestra provides a stimulating environment that encourages, challenges and develops the students' fullest musical potential. With their close relationship to the Yakima Symphony Orchestra, YYSO and YES! provide students in the Yakima and surrounding communities with an orchestral experience that contributes to lifelong learning and provides the community with an excellent youth-centered musical program.

Although a subsidiary organization of the Yakima Symphony Orchestra, the administration, funding and staffing of YYSO and YES!, with the exception of our conductors, are provided by parent and community volunteers. **Our success depends on your support and involvement.** Please carefully read this Student and Parent Handbook and complete all necessary enrollment forms prior to your student's participation with YYSO or YES! We look forward to your help in making YYSO and YES! successful.

1. Enrollment Policy

Prior to participation with YYSO or YES!, the Registration Form (a two-sided form) must be completed and turned in. Payment in full (Option #1) or one-half of the total tuition (Option #2) must be received on or by the second Monday in September. The balance of the tuition must be paid on or before the second Monday in January. We expect each family to honor this agreement. Students whose forms are incomplete or received late will be counted as absent, since this is a prerequisite to participation with YYSO and YES! Students requesting financial assistance must submit the Financial Assistance Request Form by the second Monday in September or the second Monday in January (for students who participate in January auditions and enroll, for the first time, in January) AND the minimum tuition payment as described in the Financial Assistance Form.

2. Tuition Policy

YYSO and YES! are funded primarily by tuition. Revenue from fundraising, donations and grants helps us to meet expenses, but these vary from year to year. Expenses include conductor salaries, rent for rehearsal space, rent for concert space, music purchase/rental/copying, instruments, equipment, printing, advertising and general operating expenses. To keep overhead and tuition low, YYSO and YES! both utilize a volunteer staff.

3. Financial Assistance Policy

YYSO and YES! are committed to our community and strive to provide equal opportunity to all. It is the desire of YYSO and YES! to assist any young musician with financial needs who also possesses the desire, time, talent and commitment necessary for active participation in YYSO or YES!. A limited amount of financial assistance is available for tuition assistance. We request that all financial assistance applicants contribute financially as they are able so that the YYSO and YES! can serve as many young musicians as possible with the limited financial assistance that is available. Financial assistance will be considered on a case-by-case basis and must be approved by the YYSO Governing Committee. For a Financial Assistance Request application, please visit our website at www.yyso.org.

4. Code of Conduct

In order for students to fully benefit from advanced musical instruction and performance provided through membership in YYSO and YES!, we expect all students and parents/guardians to adhere to the requirements provided in this Student and Parent Handbook. We also expect that each family help support the YYSO and YES! programs through active involvement. In addition:

- 1) Each student and family will respect the direction of the conductors and will understand that chair placements are determined by the musician's professionalism, conduct, attendance, participation and audition and will be the sole discretion of the conductor.
- 2) All students will show up to rehearsals and concerts on time with instrument tuned and ready to play at the specified start. Late arrivals are not only disruptive and discourteous, but also unprofessional.
- 3) Each student will read and follow the Attendance/Absence Policy stated below.
- 4) Each family will provide their student appropriate concert attire that adheres to the Concert Requirements Policy described below.
- 5) At all times students will conduct themselves in a professional manner through dress, participation, conduct and respect to others.
- 6) Students will take care of the music provided by YYSO and YES! and will be responsible for the replacement of lost or damaged music.
- 7) As guests of Englewood Christian Church and YYSO/YES! sponsored event locations, students and families will be restricted to certain areas of use. At Englewood Christian Church, our facility usage only includes the rehearsal room, adjacent restrooms, and the hallways and exit doors nearest this room; these are the only areas of access to students.
- 8) Snacks and drinks are restricted to the non-carpeted areas only. Gum chewing during rehearsals and concerts is prohibited.
- 9) Your courteous and respectful behavior is expected while representing YYSO and YES!
- 10) Each student and family will participate in fundraising opportunities. Please see Fundraising Policy below.
- 11) The use of alcohol, tobacco, drugs or participation in activities leading to damage to property while at Englewood Christian Church or any location sponsored by YYSO and YES! is strictly prohibited and will be justification for expulsion from these programs.
- 12) The use of electronic devices, such as cell phones, iPods, MP3 players, etc., are distractions to the learning and performing environment for everyone and will not be allowed during rehearsals and concerts. We ask that these be turned off and put away during these activities.
- 13) The YYSO and YES! programs are supported by a volunteer staff made up of parents of YYSO and YES! students, past and present. We require participation as described in our Volunteer Program (separate document). YYSO and YES! will cease to exist without the active participation from parents/guardians like you. Please see Parent Volunteer Responsibilities below.

5. Concert Requirements

Students are expected to participate in all dress rehearsals and perform in all concerts. It is expected that all students arrive on time as directed by their conductor and schedule. Parents are responsible for transportation arrangements to and from rehearsals and concerts. It is vital that when representing YYSO and YES! each family provides their student with appropriate dress attire for rehearsals and concert performance. We ask that all concert attire adhere to the list below. Any student not appropriately dressed will not be allowed to perform, and as such will be considered absent and will be

in violation of the Code of Conduct. The goal of concert attire is to promote a unified, professional and polished appearance.

YYSO and YES! Concert Attire Girls:

- Black long-sleeved dress **OR** black long-sleeved blouse with black skirt or black dress pants (dress and skirt must cover knees and blouse must cover skin)
- Black hose or black knee-highs (no fish-net or lace hose)
- Black dress shoes (no sneakers); if shoes have shoe strings – shoe strings must be black

YYSO and YES! Concert Attire Boys:

- White long-sleeved dress shirt
- Black dress pants
- Black socks
- Black dress shoes (no sneakers); if shoes have shoe strings – shoe strings must be black
- Black bow-tie and cummerbund

Ties and cummerbunds are available for purchase at *Lin Paul's Clothier* in Yakima. Their address is 101 N. 3rd Street and the phone number is (509) 248-6191.

6. Schedules / Calendar

All YYSO and YES! rehearsals will be conducted at Englewood Christian Church (ECC) located at 511 North 44th Avenue, Yakima, WA 98908, unless otherwise stated. All YES! rehearsals will be conducted at ECC every Monday night from 5:00 to 6:00pm, and YYSO rehearsals will be conducted at ECC every Monday night from 6:30 to 8:30pm, unless otherwise stated. Occasionally, rehearsals may be canceled or rescheduled due to unforeseen events such as weather conditions or emergencies. In such event, every attempt is made to notify students as soon as possible.

Concerts will usually be performed at the Yakima Valley Museum and the Capitol Theatre. We have an autumn concert, typically held at a high school or other venue. We have a fundraising event in the spring, *Waltzing with the Youth Symphony*, usually held at the Harman Center. On occasion, other performance opportunities become available to us. These will be communicated in advance. Examples of these have included: YYSO performance on the Lower Valley Community Concert Series in 2013; YYSO performance on the YVCC Latin Music Celebration in 2014. Please see our Calendar for performance dates, times and locations.

7. Attendance / Absence Policy

YYSO and YES! have a high level of expectation regarding the professional behavior of students. Regular attendance at all rehearsals and concerts is critically important for the success of the student musician and the orchestra as a whole. Consequently, students are expected to attend every rehearsal and concert. Attendance plays a role in the student's chair placement, and attendance records will be kept.

In order to continue with YYSO and YES!, students may not be absent for more than two (2) full rehearsals or four (4) half-rehearsals per semester. It will be the responsibility of the student or parent/guardian to keep track of the number of absences; no reminders will be given. In the event that the maximum number of absences is exceeded, a letter will be sent to the student's home along with

the Student Absence Appeal Form to be completed and received by mail on or before the following Monday's rehearsal. Such appeals must be made in writing, as directed on the form, to the YYSO Governing Committee with a copy delivered to the conductor of the student's program. During the appeal process, the student is expected to attend all rehearsals or concerts with his or her instrument; however, the decision to play will be at the sole discretion of the conductor. Following appeal, reinstatement will be at the discretion of the YYSO Governing Committee. Failure to satisfy these expectations will disqualify the student from membership in the orchestra.

Students must perform at all concerts; failure to do so may lead to expulsion from YYSO and YES! programs, unless there are extenuating circumstances not reasonably under the student's control such as illness or family emergency. In the event the student misses a concert, he or she must complete the Student Absence Appeal Form and submit immediately following the concert, and it must be received by mail with a copy delivered to the conductor of the student's program. Once received, it will be reviewed, and a decision will be made as to whether or not the student will be reinstated.

It is the responsibility of the student or parent/guardian to phone/text the YYSO/YES! Attendance Coordinator AND text the student's conductor when the student will be absent from a rehearsal or concert. This should take place prior to the start. We will not accept any such communication through another individual, including a friend or fellow YYSO or YES! student.

8. Chair Seating

As previously stated in the Code of Conduct, seating or chair placements are determined by the musician's professionalism, conduct, attendance, participation and audition and will be under the sole discretion of the conductor. Chair positions may impart more responsibility to the student, require that student to be a leader of his or her section, perform more complicated arrangements and require the student to conduct him or herself in a more professional manner.

9. Parent Volunteer Responsibilities

As a non-profit subsidiary, YYSO/YES! functions under a volunteer system, which allows us to charge less for tuition, but in so doing places a greater responsibility on Parent Volunteers. We, the volunteer YYSO Governing Committee, are committed to YYSO and YES! and therefore give our time and resources in an effort to provide students and the community with an arts program that enriches all our lives. However, the Committee cannot do this alone. We need your help. This is not optional for parents/guardians; we expect you to actively participate in the continued development of these programs.

Throughout the year, we will need parent involvement in rehearsals, concerts, fundraising, helping with the orchestra libraries, advertising, *Waltzing With Youth Symphony* event and/or joining the YYSO Governing Committee. This is a great opportunity for you to share your commitment and passion for your student's musical education while contributing your time and skills to a worthy program.

10. Fundraisers

At this time, YYSO and YES! have two primary fundraisers that help offset expenses. Each fundraiser is factored into our budget and has been developed to provide maximum revenue for reasonable input of effort. Our priority is to keep the focus on the orchestra experience for students and not to fundraise all year long.

- 1) **FALL:** We sell Butter Braid® Pastries in the fall. Each family is asked to participate by selling the pastries to neighbors, families and friends.
- 2) **SPRING:** In the spring, our fundraiser is *Waltzing with the Youth Symphony*. This event is usually held on a Friday in March from 7 – 10 pm. The event includes ballroom and swing dance instruction along with music from the Youth Symphony, Yakima Ensemble for Strings and a local high school jazz band. Desserts and silent auction are also included. This fundraiser requires everyone to help! Each family is asked to sell tickets and volunteers are needed to acquire silent auction donations and help with publicity, set-up, tear-down, transportation of instruments and stands, serving dessert, etc. We look forward to another year and an opportunity in seeing this through with your involvement.

11. School Music Programs & Private Lessons

As a student participant in YYSO and YES!, it is expected that each student remain an active member in his or her school band or orchestra. Since YYSO and YES! only meet for rehearsals once a week through the school year, the majority of group playing will be provided at school. We encourage participation in school performances, as these activities help build a broader versatility to students than can be offered through YYSO and YES! alone. However, it is important that each student prevent over-committing his or her schedule, because regular attendance in YYSO or YES! is vital to the group's success.

YYSO and YES! strongly encourage all members to take private lessons. Private lessons are very helpful in developing strong musicians and a more advanced orchestra, one that students find more rewarding. YES! students are still learning many fundamentals of playing an instrument, let alone playing with an ensemble. Private lesson support is critical for development of core musicianship. YYSO music, in particular, can be challenging; students will benefit from the supplementary support provided by building knowledge and technique through private instruction. If you need assistance in finding a private teacher, please let us know.

12. Communication

At full capacity, the YYSO will have 80 student musicians and YES! will have 40-50 student musicians. This is a lot of people with whom to communicate important information. We have developed a variety of ways to share this information with students and families. Thank you for being an active communication partner!

- **Handbook:** Core information is contained in the handbook.
- **Website:** The YYSO and YES! website – www.yyso.org – provides a wealth of information for students and families including our calendar, performance schedule, policies, forms and more. Please take time to visit the website and become familiar with these resources. There is a CONTACT US form on the website for sending messages to the YYSO and YES!
- **Email:** We send email updates to students and families throughout the season. Please check your email regularly to stay current with YYSO and YES! information. Our email address is yyso.yes@gmail.com.
- **US Mail:** On occasion, we will send information via US Mail. If you change your mailing address, please let us know.
- **Telephone:** Messages may be left for the YYSO and YES! at the Yakima Symphony Orchestra (YSO) office: (509) 248-1414.
- **Texting:** Students/Families will be provided with phone numbers that may be used to text information about absences.
- **Handouts at Rehearsals:** On occasion, we will send information home via handouts at rehearsals. It is the responsibility of students to share this information with their families.

**Welcome to the YYSO and YES!
We are glad to share this experience with you.**

Thank you for participating in creating beautiful music in and for our community.