

# Performing Arts Handbook

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## TANTASQUA PERFORMING ARTS EXPECTATIONS

Tantasqua Regional School District believes that performing arts provide a valuable teaching and learning tool. The Music Department will try to provide the students of Tantasqua with as many opportunities to participate as possible.

The following expectations are based upon the following precepts:

**Do your best at all times.** It must be understood by all student-musicians that Gold Medals or Superior Ratings are not the only criteria for judging the success of an ensemble. All ensembles must strive to do their best in regard to effort, teamwork, musicianship, and representation of the Tantasqua community. Performing Arts teach participants to be honorable, loyal, and to persevere. These are the qualities that make good citizens, which is the goal of education in performing arts. Failure at Tantasqua will only be recognized if participants fail to rise to the occasion.

**Be thankful.** The opportunity to participate in the performing arts is not one that is given to all. Ability level, school and personal finances, and other considerations may not make performing arts possible for all students. If you are fortunate enough to participate, enjoy the experience and be thankful. Your instructors work tirelessly to give you these opportunities and should deserve your appreciation.

**All student-performers will remember that they are students first.** Academics will never be compromised. Most people will only be able to participate in performing arts for a few short years, while your education will last forever.

Performing Arts is not a "frill" or "outside" activity. It has an enormous impact on every student-performer who participates. We must be mindful that a commitment must be made by the school, instructor, performer, and parent to promote a positive environment.

## POLICIES FOR ENSEMBLE SELECTION

Each ensemble that requires auditions to pick a specific number of student-musicians will use a grading rubric. The rubric will be music specific and/or dance specific. The rubrics will be made by the instructing staff and approved by both the Performing Arts Coordinator and Building Principal. When selections are made, a panel will be created of two or more instructors to ensure fairness and equality.

The rubric guidelines will be handed out to the prospective student-musicians before or during the audition. At the audition, the instructor will explain the requirements necessary to make the ensemble. At the conclusion of the auditions, the instructors will review the scored rubrics with each student who tried out for the ensemble. Students can speak with the instructors to have their results explained to them in detail. The instructors may also make recommendations for skills to be worked on for future development.

The general rubrics *may* include, but not limited to the following:

1. Tone Quality
2. Sight reading ability
3. Pitch awareness
4. Dance Execution
5. Choreography
6. Concepts incorporated in the Central Districts audition rubrics found at: [www.cdmmea.org](http://www.cdmmea.org)

## **POLICIES FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS**

Parenting and instructing are extremely difficult vocations. By establishing a role for each musician, we are better able to accept the actions of the other and provide greater benefit to the children. As parents, when your child becomes involved in our music program, you have the right to understand what expectations are placed on your child. This begins with clear communication from the instructor of your child's program.

### **COMMUNICATION INSTRUCTORS SHOULD EXPECT FROM PARENTS/GUARDIANS**

1. Concerns expressed directly to the instructor about their child
2. Notification of any scheduled conflicts **at least 2 weeks in advance**
3. Calling for an appointment on a non performance/rehearsal day works best for discussing your children's progress

As your children become involved in the programs at Tantasqua, they will experience some of the most rewarding moments of their lives. It is important to understand that there may also be times when things do not go the way you or your child wishes. At these times, discussion with the instructor is encouraged.

### **APPROPRIATE CONCERNS TO DISCUSS WITH INSTRUCTOR**

1. Ways to help your child improve
2. Concerns about your child's behavior

### **ISSUES NOT APPROPRIATE TO DISCUSS WITH INSTRUCTOR**

1. Performing time
2. Ensemble strategy (including solos)
3. Other student performers

### **ROLE OF THE PARENT/GUARDIAN WITH STUDENT PERFORMERS AND INSTRUCTORS**

1. Be positive during rehearsals and performances. No student musician or instructor will try to fail. As long as maximum effort is evident, parents should appreciate that their child and instructor are doing things the right way.
2. Encourage your child to work hard. Some of the greatest successes are only learned after failure. Student musicians, parents, instructors and Tantasqua must never accept quitting.
3. Remember that the "fun" part of music is not the humor, but the journey a child takes with the ensemble to reach goals. Sometimes the "fun" times are only noticeable upon reflection of a past performance.

## POLICIES FOR STUDENT-MUSICIANS

### A. Requirements for Participation

1. **Audition for some ensembles:** Every student is highly encouraged to participate in music during the school day. Students wishing to participate in some of the Tantasqua music program ensembles may have to audition, likely in the spring prior to the start of the school year. Ample notice will be given if and when an audition is necessary. Check our website for further information: [www.tantasqua.org/ths](http://www.tantasqua.org/ths)
2. **Academic Eligibility:** Student-Musicians must have attained 15 out of 20 credits in a semester to be eligible for the next semester. For example, to be eligible for a fall music ensemble in your junior year, you must have received a minimum of 15 out of 20 credits from the previous spring semester.
3. **Emergency Medical Card:** Each student-musician's parent/guardian must complete the Emergency Medical Card. This card will be kept by the instructor in the medical kit for availability at all rehearsals and competitions/trips.
4. **Fine Arts Permission & Release Forms:** All student-musicians and parents/guardians must realize the risk of serious injury which may be a result of musical/dance participation. Parents/guardians must read and sign the permission form.
5. **Class Enrollment:** Every member in an afterschool performance ensemble must demonstrate excellent musical skills as deemed "Proficient" according to the Massachusetts Arts Curriculum Frameworks. Therefore, all members must be enrolled in chorus, music elective or a performing ensemble.
6. **Progress Reports:** Bi-weekly progress reports must be completed by your academic teachers to ensure academic integrity.

### B. Choosing the Ensemble

Choosing the members of music ensembles is the sole responsibility of the head instructor and his/her staff. Before auditions, the instructor shall provide the following information to all the candidates for the ensemble at the pre-season meeting:

1. Extent of audition period
2. Criteria used to select the ensemble
3. Rehearsal commitments
4. Performance commitments
5. Review of specific ensemble policies

When an ensemble cut becomes necessary, instructors will inform musicians of their status. Instructors are available to discuss the reason for the decision and offer alternative possibilities for participation in the ensemble or in other areas of the activity program.

### **C. Equipment**

All musicians are responsible for the proper care and security of equipment issued to them. School furnished equipment is to be worn only for rehearsals and performances. Equipment lost or not returned in good condition at the end of the year may be subject to **financial penalty**. All costume pieces are numbered. At the end of the year if the assigned number is not checked off, the student-musician is responsible for restitution unless personally funded.

### **D. Reporting an Injury**

All injuries, no matter how insignificant they may seem, should be reported to the instructor. All noted injuries will be addressed to the school nurse. Any student-musician whose injuries require a visit to a doctor must have a "return to participation" note from that physician in order to return to activities.

### **E. Attendance**

In order to participate in performances, a student-musician must attend scheduled classes on the day of a performance. Students who arrive in school without attending two full classes are ineligible to perform. In rare cases (college visits, funeral etc.), the Principal may make an exception to this rule. Once again we must remember that student-musicians are students first and should attend every class, every day.

### **F. Release From Class**

It is the responsibility of the student-musician to see his/her teacher before the classes that will be missed because of a performance. All work will be made up at the convenience of the teacher. Distance, transportation limitations, and performance times are the primary reasons for early dismissals. The Performing Arts Department will make every effort possible to schedule contests so that class time is not missed.

### **G. School Vacations**

All musicians are expected to attend rehearsals and perform during school vacations. Note that the Performing Arts Department will try to avoid this. If a family vacation or other related plans have been scheduled prior to the season, the student-musician is required to inform the instructor prior to auditioning.

### **H. Good Citizenship**

All student-musicians are expected to be good citizens in school and in public. Any infraction that results in an arrest or violation of public law will be dealt with accordingly. Also, any student-musician participating in an activity that does not represent Tantasqua in a positive manner (example; behavior at a school function) will again be dealt with accordingly. After due process, in a meeting with the Principal and Performing Arts Coordinator, suspension or termination from ensembles may take place.

### **I. Financial Obligations (only applies to Show Choir)**

Show Choir is financially supported **ONLY IN PART** by our school district. Therefore, it is necessary to require financial contributions of all show choir performers to cover the costs of shoes, costumes, sets, and competitions. The fee for participation will be determined each year by the week of auditions and shared with all auditioning. We have a strict *no refund* policy. We ask that all payment be made in a timely manner in order to purchase the necessary items. Details of payment options will also be shared at this time.

## COMMITMENT

After being selected to be a member of an ensemble, Tantasqua Regional High School student musicians are expected to attend all rehearsals and performances. Rehearsals generally average two and a half hours in length. Weekend practices vary by ensemble and schedule, but should be expected. Often times, there will be performances and/or competitions that will require weekend commitment.

When students miss a rehearsal for any reason, it has a negative impact not only on their learning, but the preparedness of the entire ensemble. Students are only allowed 2 **excused** absences before they will be dismissed from the ensemble. Remember, there are no unexcused absences. All unexcused absences will be addressed at the discretion of the instructor. You are expected to have your music in hand for every rehearsal.

All student musicians and parents/guardians must realize that performances may be scheduled during school vacations. Music programs demand much more commitment than a club or recreational activity. Student musicians should understand that they will be asked to make sacrifices to be in an ensemble. If they are willing to do this, they will find the musical experience one that they will treasure for a lifetime.

We are looking for students who **CARE**:

**Commitment-** to the group effort. **DO MORE** than your share. Set up / clean up / load the truck without complaining.

**Attitude-** Keep your comments and outlook positive. Gossip is **BAD**. You do not need to be friends with all, but all group members must respect each other to work as a team.

**Responsibility-** Attendance at **ALL** rehearsals is **REQUIRED**. In the event of legitimate illness or emergency, directors must be notified **BY A PARENT PRIOR TO** the missed event. Students must make up missed work prior to the next rehearsal.

**Excellence-** Creating beautiful music is fun, but that “fun” is a result of a great deal of hard work. Accept nothing less than your best.



# **TANTASQUA PERFORMING ARTS PROGRAM CONFLICT RESOLUTION PROCESS**

Performing Arts involvement, while fun and exciting, can be very emotional and time consuming. Because of this, conflicts and issues may arise between a student-musician and the instructor. It is imperative that any conflict/issue be addressed immediately, and as directly as possible, so that it can be resolved promptly.

## **Step One: Student-Instructor**

The issue should be presented by the student-musician as soon as possible to the instructor. The instructor may be unaware of the student-musician's feelings with regard to the issue and therefore an explanation to the instructor is vital. We must all understand that this is not an attack on the instructor, but a way of having young adults speak for themselves in a mature and responsible manner. This discussion should not take place during the performance or rehearsal but rather in private immediately after any contest. A scheduled appointment time works out best for all involved, as cooler heads generally prevail. Parent/guardians may feel the need to speak on behalf of their children. That is acceptable and appreciated as long as scheduled time to meet has been established.

## **Step Two: Student-Performing Arts Coordinator**

If a satisfactory resolution is not reached through direct contact with the instructor, the student-musician and/or parent should contact the Performing Arts Coordinator. The instructor should be informed that this contact is going to be made to the Performing Arts Coordinator. All dealing with those involved must be made "above the table" in an open and honest atmosphere. Opinions may differ, but the right to converse in a mature fashion must always be respected. This discussion should take place as soon as possible; it is important that the student-musician and their parents/guardians trust that any comments, concerns, or issues raised to the Performing Arts Coordinator will be addressed. Student-musicians and parents/guardians may also expect to hear from the Performing Arts Coordinator regarding the outcome of their concerns. Issues concerning instructor personnel or the student-musician may not be publicly communicated. While there is no guarantee that all parties will agree with the resolution or finding, a thorough, respectful airing of different perceptions and experiences can lead to more productive relationships and clear understanding in the future.

## **Step Three: Student - Principal Contact**

If a satisfactory resolution has not yet been reached, the student-musician or parent/guardian should contact the High School Principal. The Performing Arts Coordinator should be informed of this contact.

## **Step Four: Student - Superintendent Contact**

As above, if a satisfactory resolution with the Principal has not been reached, the student-musician or parent/guardian should contact the Superintendent. The principal should be informed of this contact.

## **"Retribution"**

On occasion there is a perception by members of the Tantasqua community that voicing an opinion or concern about a instructor, or the Performing Arts Department, carries the risk of "retribution" towards the student-musician either by the instructor or by other staff members within the department. The Performing Arts Coordinator and instructors are committed to ensuring that there will be no "retribution" in any form for raising an issue or concern.

## THE “ALTERNATE” PERFORMER

The Alternate only applies to Show Choir and The Marching Band. The purpose of the alternate is the help eliminate “holes” in the formation.

This is an ongoing issue that our show choir, marching band and all other ensembles must concern themselves with. An absence of a student during either a practice or a performance creates these holes in the formation. These holes not only negatively affect the look of the band’s formations but also create stress, concern, and confusion for the students surrounding the holes. Each student’s participation affects all students surrounding them.

*Q: How are alternates designated?*

*A: Past experience: attendance, preparation, participation, dedication.*

1. Students that have been habitually tardy or absent in the past may be asked to be an alternate. The alternate will fully participate during rehearsals and in stands at games.
2. Students with no past history in the show choir or marching band may be assigned as an alternate. However they may also share a spot with another new member. If both students prove dedication throughout the season, one of 3 things may happen:
  - a. They split the performances 50/50.
  - b. One person keeps the spot and the other takes over another spot from someone else that quit or lost their spot.
  - c. One person keeps the spot and the other occupies a new spot created exclusively for them. These added spots will typically take place on the ends of lines or formations as to not disrupt the inner flow of the formation.

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*The alternate helps turn a negative situation into a positive experience for everyone.*

A person occupying a spot may need to be absent due to uncontrollable circumstances (illness, death in the family). This happens to everyone.

1. By having the alternate fill in for that rehearsal:
  - a. The spot is filled.
  - b. The people surrounding that spot are more successful as they are not confused by the uncommonly open area (spot) around them.
  - c. The absent person has the stress of being absent alleviated as they will know their spot is filled and they can feel as though they are not letting their team down.
  - d. The alternate is able to take the opportunity to fill the spot for both the rehearsal and that week’s performance.
2. The alternates will have the opportunity to perform.
  - a. Each year, every ensemble experiences one or two members that are habitually late or absent from rehearsal and performances. Alternates whose actions prove their dedication will be privileged with taking over a spot from someone that may not be willing or able to be dedicated.
  - b. If every member privileged with a spot consistently demonstrates dedicated actions, extra spots will be added onto the show throughout the season to accommodate equally dedicated alternates.