



**RICHMOND  
SYMPHONY**  
SCHOOL OF MUSIC



**2024-25 HANDBOOK**

[WWW.RICHMONDSYMPHONY.SOM.COM](http://WWW.RICHMONDSYMPHONY.SOM.COM)

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*Click a heading above to visit the linked page.*

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Mary Morton Parsons Education Fund  
The Brian Szabo Memorial Scholarship Fund

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# RICHMOND SYMPHONY SCHOOL OF MUSIC MISSION STATEMENT

*The Richmond Symphony performs, teaches, and champions music to inspire and unite our communities.*

To that end, the Richmond Symphony School of Music upholds four core values:

1.

To create lasting human connections, strengthen interpersonal relationships, and enrich human lives through the unique power of music.

2.

To provide access and service to all members of the community.

3.

To pursue excellence in performance and education.

4.

To ensure diversity, equity, and inclusion.

## RSSoM ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

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**Walter Bitner**

Director of Education and Community Engagement  
Richmond Symphony  
[wbitner@richmondsymphony.com](mailto:wbitner@richmondsymphony.com)



**Marcey W. Leonard**

Community Partnerships Manager/RSSoM Program Manager  
Richmond Symphony  
[mleonard@richmondsymphony.com](mailto:mleonard@richmondsymphony.com)



**Anita Williams**

Education Coordinator  
Co-Teacher, Youth Community Strings  
Richmond Symphony  
[education@richmondsymphony.com](mailto:education@richmondsymphony.com)



**Caitlin Barry**

Program Manager & Lead Instructor, Youth Community Strings  
Richmond Symphony  
[cbarry@richmondsymphony.com](mailto:cbarry@richmondsymphony.com)



**Anna Mitchell**

Education Assistant  
Richmond Symphony  
[education@richmondsymphony.com](mailto:education@richmondsymphony.com)

# General Richmond Symphony School of Music Policies

## STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

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RSSoM students are part of the Richmond Symphony community and serve as ambassadors for this organization: Students are expected to act in a professional manner while part of their classes or ensembles. Students' actions reflect on the organization. Expectations of students include thorough preparation, good manners at all rehearsals, classes, and concerts, and respect for conductors, staff, parent representatives, volunteers, and rehearsal/concert facilities.

### **AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR OR VIOLENCE**

No aggressive or violent behavior will be tolerated. If at any point a student becomes physically aggressive, creating safety concerns for others, the student will be removed from rehearsal/class by RSSoM staff. An immediate phone call will be made to a parent/guardian to pick the student up, and a meeting will be held to discuss the student's future participation in RSSoM. Any aggressive or violent behavior is grounds for dismissal from the RSSoM.

### **CELL PHONES & ELECTRONICS**

The use of cell phones for any purpose beyond supporting work in rehearsal/class is prohibited (e.g. for use as a metronome, tuner, or recording device, etc.). Any need for communication can be directed through RSSoM staff.

### **DRUGS, ALCOHOL, AND WEAPONS**

No alcohol, other intoxicating substances, controlled substances, tobacco, or weapons of any kind are allowed at RSSoM classes or rehearsals at any venue, including but not limited to the Dominion Energy Center, Richmond's First Baptist Church, The Saint Paul's Baptist Church, and VCU. Drug and alcohol use are grounds for dismissal from RSSoM. Possession of a firearm or dangerous weapon anywhere during a RSSoM event is cause for automatic dismissal from RSSoM.

# COMMUNICATION

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Email: [education@richmondsymphony.com](mailto:education@richmondsymphony.com)

Website: [www.richmondsymphonysom.com](http://www.richmondsymphonysom.com)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/RichmondSymphonySoM](http://www.facebook.com/RichmondSymphonySoM)

Instagram: [@richmondsymphonysom](https://www.instagram.com/richmondsymphonysom)

YouTube: [www.youtube.com/@richmondsymphonyschoolofmusic](http://www.youtube.com/@richmondsymphonyschoolofmusic)

## WITHDRAWAL/DROPPING OUT & REFUNDS

All RSSoM students are expected to make a full commitment through the length of their respective class(es). If you must drop out at any point, please email [education@richmondsymphony.com](mailto:education@richmondsymphony.com) at least two weeks in advance. A full refund is available if the student gives notice to withdraw before the third rehearsal/week of class. After this point, a full commitment will be expected of every student and no refund will be granted if there is a need to withdraw. As a courtesy, please inform your teacher/conductor of your withdrawal. Students who withdraw from the Youth Orchestra Program mid-year forfeit their seat in their ensemble and will need to audition during the annual auditions to regain entrance into the program.

## PHOTO/VIDEO WAIVER

The Richmond Symphony School of Music (RSSoM) will occasionally hire a photographer or videographer to document rehearsals, dress rehearsals and/or concerts. These photos/videos may be used in publicity items (website, programs, ads, etc.) pertaining to RSSoM programming. Last names and personal information will not be associated with images. To opt out, please email [education@richmondsymphony.com](mailto:education@richmondsymphony.com).

# FINANCIALS

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Tuition and financial aid information for RSSoM programs and courses, including:

- Richmond Symphony Youth Orchestra ensembles
- Future Music Educators Symposium
- Richmond Symphony Symphony Series Companion Courses
- Young Composers Seminar

## TUITION PAYMENT DEADLINE

Tuition must be paid by the third week of rehearsal/class. Students will be placed on probation if payments (or payment arrangements) are not made by this deadline. Students may be removed from the program if payment (or payment arrangement) is not made by the fifth week of rehearsal/class.

## TUITION ASSISTANCE

In an effort to ensure that RSSoM participation is accessible to all students regardless of their ability to pay, we are proud to offer scholarships on an as-needed basis. Tuition assistance applications are available online at the beginning of July. Applicants will be notified by email once Richmond Symphony staff have processed their application. Families must reapply for tuition assistance each season. Please contact [education@richmondsymphony.com](mailto:education@richmondsymphony.com) with questions or for more information. [Download the Financial Assistance form here.](#)

*The YOP tuition assistance program is supported by the Music Education Scholarship Fund of the Richmond Symphony Endowment.*

## RICHMOND SYMPHONY TICKETS – SPECIAL OFFERS

Students 18 and under qualify for a Child ticket. Child tickets are FREE for most Symphony Series concerts during the current Richmond Symphony season. Visit the Richmond Symphony website and select the concert you are interested in. There will be a drop-down menu where you can choose the “Child” price code. This will change your balance for this ticket to \$0.00.

Additional special offers for Richmond Symphony concerts and events will be sent via email.

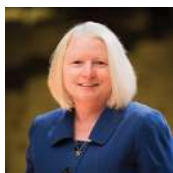


# Richmond Symphony Youth Orchestra Program (YOP)

## YOP ARTISTIC STAFF

**Hae Lee**

Richmond Symphony Youth Orchestra Conductor  
*Associate Conductor, Richmond Symphony*

**Sandy Goldie**

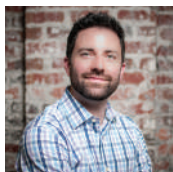
Youth Concert Orchestra Conductor  
*Director of Music Education, Virginia Commonwealth University*

**Melissa Jones**

Camerata Strings Conductor  
*Orchestra Director, Collegiate School*

**Matt Wilson**

String Sinfonietta Conductor  
*Music Educator, Chesterfield County Public Schools*

**Justin Alexander**

Percussion Ensemble Conductor  
*Associate Professor of Music and Director of Percussion Studies,  
Virginia Commonwealth University*

# YOP MEMBERSHIP

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Auditions for new membership will take place in both June and November. **The only opportunity for current members to audition for a more advanced ensemble is in June.** Please visit our website for more information regarding audition requirements or contact the Youth Orchestra Team directly.

Please refer to the RSSoM website ([www.richmondsymphonysom.com](http://www.richmondsymphonysom.com)) throughout the year for date postings and audition requirements for both current and new students. Requirements typically include scales, solo(s), prepared excerpt(s), and sight reading.

Following the audition, each student will receive an email within four to six weeks outlining the results of the audition. Registration materials will be emailed in mid summer.

## SEATING AUDITIONS

Seating auditions may take place at the CS, YCO and RSYO levels. Seating auditions are typically scheduled in place of a regular rehearsal day. Audition excerpts will consist of pieces from the upcoming concert cycle and will be made available to students no earlier than 3 weeks in advance of the scheduled audition. A make-up audition date will be available before the audition date only. No students will be heard after the scheduled audition date.

Student musicians will be evaluated on musicality (phrasing, dynamics, etc.), rhythmic & note accuracy, preparedness, fluency, and intonation in the seating audition. Other factors including weekly attendance, professionalism, preparedness and student leadership also play a role in final decisions regarding musician seating. Please note that seating assignments are not “permanent”—the conductor may find it necessary to alter seating at any point during the concert cycle.

Seating auditions are a great way for the conductor to track the progress of each student in the ensemble. Within a few weeks of the seating audition, each student will receive written feedback on his/her performance. Students are encouraged to approach their conductor with questions about the audition and/or feedback.

Seating auditions are not optional—every student is required to perform in the seating auditions. If a student misses an audition, for any reason, he/she will still need to perform for the conductor, and will be placed at the back of the section until the following seating audition. Students need to take these auditions seriously and prepare the music to the best of their ability. Every student must audition (unless excused by the conductor). If a student does not show for the seating audition and did not play a make-up audition the week prior they will be marked absent.

## TARDINESS/EARLY DEPARTURE

Musicians are marked tardy if they are not in their seat, tuned, with their music and a pencil on the stand by the beginning of the rehearsal or sectional. Arriving late or leaving early is counted as one half (½) of an absence.

## ATTENDANCE AND NOTIFICATION OF ABSENCE

One of the guiding philosophies of the Youth Orchestra Program is that personal responsibility is as important as musical excellence. By accepting membership into YOP, our musicians acknowledge a serious commitment to musical training and make YOP participation a high priority. YOP conductors prepare rehearsal schedules and concert programs based on full and punctual attendance from every musician.

Students should carefully review their schedules and try to work out conflicts well in advance to try to avoid an absence. As soon as you are aware of an absence, early departure, or late arrival, please complete the online Absence Form, found [here](#). Official notice of absences, tardy, early dismissal, etc. must be submitted through the Absence Form.

### **SS, CS, and YCO:**

During the fall concert cycle (September–December), students are allowed no more than two (2) non-consecutive absences, regardless of reason. \*

During the spring concert cycle (December–May), students are allowed no more than three (3) non-consecutive absences, regardless of reason. \*

### **RSYO:**

Students are allowed two (2) absences per concert cycle. \*

If a student needs to miss an additional rehearsal during the concert cycle, permission will need to be received from the conductor.

*\* Absences will not be marked as excused or unexcused but simply as an absence. The reason for the absence is not the issue; it is the absence itself.*

If a student reaches their maximum amount of absences for the concert cycle, they will receive a warning from the Youth Orchestra Manager. If a student is absent from a dress rehearsal, or if absences continue after the warning, participation in the upcoming concert will be at the discretion of the conductor and may require an additional audition of the musician's part and/or a meeting with the student and parent/guardian. Absences due to extenuating circumstances will be handled on a case-by-case basis.

## STUDENT PREPAREDNESS

If it appears to a conductor that a student is struggling or unprepared for a concert, the student may be asked to play privately for the conductor. At the conductor's discretion, students may be asked to not perform in the concert if the student's progress is not comparable to the rest of the orchestra, or if the repertoire is beyond the student's technical ability.

## SCHOOL PARTICIPATION

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The Richmond Symphony Youth Orchestra Program (YOP) is very proud to support in-school music education. Our policy states that every YOP musician must participate in their respective school band or orchestra program if class instruction is offered on his/her instrument during the school day. If a legitimate scheduling conflict prevents the student from enrolling in his or her school ensemble, verification of their past/intended enrollment in the school music program must be confirmed by their band or orchestra teacher. If you have any questions about this requirement, please contact the YOP team.

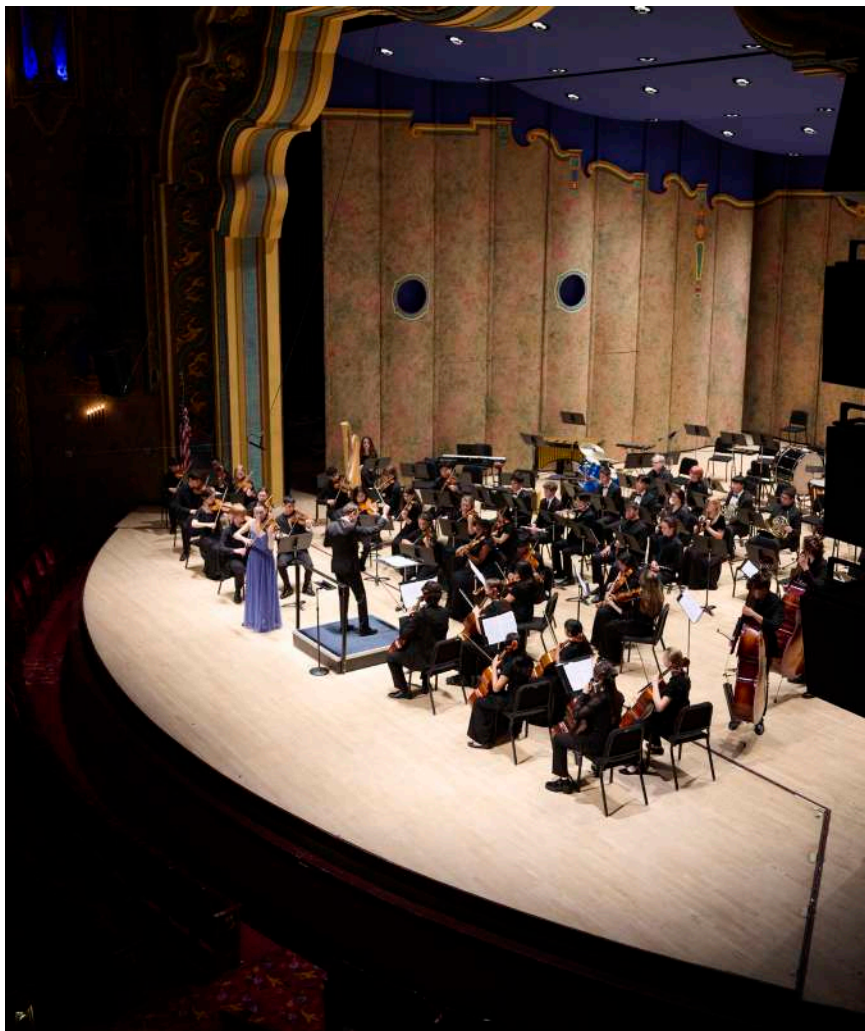


Photo by James H Loving Photography.

# FINANCIALS

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## MEMBERSHIP FEES

The Youth Orchestra Program strives to keep tuition affordable. The total tuition below is the combined cost of Tuition, Concert Package, and Activity Fee. We have combined those three payments into one total payment for ease.

### Total Combined Tuition August 2024–May 2025

ENSEMBLE	TUITION
RSYO	\$685
YCO	\$595
CS	\$530
SS	\$460
Percussion	\$640

## STUDENT WORK STUDY

A limited number of work study opportunities are available for students participating in Richmond Symphony Youth Orchestra (RSYO). The work study program offers students the opportunity to work as assistants in the Richmond Symphony offices in exchange for a tuition discount for the current YOP season. Applications are reviewed at the beginning of each season.

## LOSS OF MEMBERSHIP

Membership in YOP is an earned privilege. All YOP members and parents should be aware that repeated absences, tardiness, or serious and/or continued policy violations are all grounds for review from YOP. If behavioral issues or more than two absences arise, a consultation between the member in question, their parent(s)/guardian(s), the orchestra conductor, and Richmond Symphony's Director of Education & Community Engagement may be held before a dismissal.

# REHEARSALS AND SECTIONALS

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Rehearsals and sectionals are **mandatory** and will be outlined on the RSSoM/YOP calendar. Students must communicate with the YOP team and their conductor, in writing, at least two weeks in advance if they have a conflict with a rehearsal or sectional date so we may work together to find a solution. All absences must be recorded in the [Absence Notification Form](#).

Students are expected to arrive at rehearsal at least 15 minutes early and sign in using the check-in sheets. Musicians not signed in will be marked absent. Students should be in their seats and ready to rehearse at least 10 minutes prior to the start of rehearsal. They are expected to remain on location for the full duration of rehearsal until dismissal unless otherwise communicated with the Richmond Symphony staff member on site.

## Rehearsal Locations & Times for 2024–2025

### String Sinfonietta (SS):

Mondays, 5:00pm–6:30 pm

Richmond’s First Baptist Church

2709 Monument Avenue, Richmond, VA 23220

### Camerata Strings (CS):

Mondays, 5:00–6:45 pm

Richmond’s First Baptist Church

2709 Monument Avenue, Richmond, VA 23220

### Youth Concert Orchestra (YCO):

Mondays, 5:00–7:00 pm

Mooney Hall (MH), Dominion Energy Center

612 E. Grace Street, Richmond, VA 23219

### Richmond Symphony Youth Orchestra (RSYO):

Tuesdays, 5:00–7:30 pm

Mooney Hall (MH), Dominion Energy Center

612 E. Grace Street, Richmond, VA 23219

### Percussion Ensemble

Wednesdays \*, 5:00–7:00 pm

VCU Percussion Studio

922 Park Avenue, Richmond, VA 23220

*\* Percussion Ensemble students will join their assigned large ensembles for the final four weeks of each concert cycle. The full Percussion Ensemble will continue to meet on Wednesdays during this time. Please see the YCO and RSYO Percussion Ensemble calendars for more details.*

# REHEARSAL DETAILS

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## WHAT TO BRING TO REHEARSAL

It is very important for every student to come prepared to rehearsal. Students are responsible for bringing their instrument, music stand (labeled with their name), pencil, water bottle, and music.

## SNACK

Each rehearsal, students are given 10–15 minutes to enjoy a snack break. We will purchase snacks to start off our supply, but we ask for each family to contribute individually-wrapped, nut-free snacks at one rehearsal per year. The large snack packs found in bulk (~40 snacks per pack) are great for youth orchestra! A snack sign-up link is distributed via email at the start of each season. Please be sure to sign up for a rehearsal at which you will provide snacks.

## LOST MUSIC

We expect students to be responsible with the music that is provided to them. Please notify the YOP team ([education@richmondsymphony.com](mailto:education@richmondsymphony.com)) if music gets lost so that replacement materials are ready before or at the start of rehearsal.

## REHEARSAL NOTES

As needed, the conductor of each ensemble and/or a Parent Representative will put together notes from rehearsals, including specific spots to practice at home. Students are first encouraged to contact their stand partners for these notes whenever absent, then the YOP team as needed.

## TRANSPORTATION

Students must arrange for their own transportation to and from rehearsals and concerts. Families who opt in for the carpool option will receive access to a carpool list sorted by school. Families are to make their own carpool arrangements. Students must be picked up immediately following each rehearsal.

## INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY

If there is inclement weather, a decision to delay or cancel rehearsal will be made by 2:00 pm on the day of rehearsal. Every family should make their own decision regarding attendance based on their local road conditions and the safety issues. Announcements to delay or cancel a rehearsal will be communicated to all students and families by email.

## FACILITY RULES

Remember, we are guests! Each facility and its staff must receive the utmost respect from YOP students and parents. If any misbehavior is reported, a warning letter will be sent to the student's home. Food, beverages (with the exception of a water bottle) and gum are not allowed at rehearsal unless provided by the Parent Representatives.

## PARKING OPTIONS

### Richmond's First Baptist Church

There is free and ample parking available for YOP rehearsals at Richmond's First Baptist Church. This parking lot is located at the entrance of the church on N. Mulberry Street between Park Avenue and Monument Avenue.

### Dominion Energy Center

Student parking for rehearsals held at the Dominion Energy Center is available at the Second Presbyterian Parking Deck (5 N. 5<sup>th</sup> St., Richmond, VA 23219). **Parking passes are \$3 per rehearsal. The total cost will be added to your account at the end of each concert cycle.** Be sure to insert these passes into the parking ticket machine correctly. Do not bend, tape, or modify your validated parking ticket in any way. If you damage your ticket, please see a YOP staff member for a new one.

Carpool drop-off and pick-up will be available at the Dominion Energy Center for families wishing to avoid the expense of parking. Parent representatives, YOP staff, and building security will be present and visible to provide peace of mind regarding student safety.

### W.E. Singleton Center for the Performing Arts

Some rehearsals and performances may be located at the W.E. Singleton Center for the Performing Arts on VCU's Monroe Park Campus. Street parking is available on various roads around the building. If you opt for street parking, please pay close attention to signage with details about payment and time restrictions. Additionally, a parking deck is located just a short walk away at 1111 W. Broad Street. More information about this parking deck can be found [here](#).



# CONCERTS

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## DRESS REHEARSAL AND CONCERT ATTENDANCE

Dress rehearsal and concert attendance is mandatory. Missing a dress rehearsal and/ or concert may jeopardize your membership in YOP or result in the need to re-audition for subsequent seasons. Please review the concert schedule before committing to YOP. If you foresee a conflict, please notify the YOP team immediately. Requests to be excused from a concert need to be submitted in writing and signed by the student and guardian. A response will be sent via email. If a dress rehearsal is missed for any reason, the student's participation in the concert is at the discretion of the conductor.

## CONCERT DETAILS

A concert worksheet will be sent home with the musician prior to each concert. The concert worksheet will include dress rehearsal time/location, concert attire, directions and parking information and any other details pertaining to the performance. Concert worksheets will also be sent via email prior to the concert.

## YOP EVENTS

Please reference the YOP calendar, given to students at their first rehearsal and posted on our website, for a complete and up-to-date schedule of concerts and events.



Photo by James H Loving Photography.

## CONCERT ATTIRE

A concert dress code is enforced so that the audience will stay focused on the music during the performance and won't be distracted by individuals in the ensemble. If a musician comes to a concert in unacceptable attire, they will not be allowed on stage until dressed appropriately.

### RSYO and YCO

#### Option 1:

- Black top—no tank tops; shoulders must be covered
- Black dress pants or floor-length skirt
- Black dress shoes (closed toe)
- Black tights or trouser socks
- Jewelry should be limited and modest, and should not impede movement

#### Option 2:

- Black tuxedo
- Black tuxedo bow tie
- White tuxedo shirt
- Black dress shoes
- Black socks
- Jewelry should be limited and modest, and should not impede movement

### CS and SS

- White top—no tank tops; shoulders must be covered
- Black dress pants or floor-length skirt
- Black dress shoes (closed toe)
- Black tights or trouser socks
- Optional: long black necktie
- Jewelry should be limited and modest, and should not impede movement

# PARENT/GUARDIAN INFORMATION

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## CODE OF CONDUCT

YOP is committed to providing student musicians an opportunity to advance their skills in a welcoming environment that will challenge and nurture their musical development. Parents/guardians are valued partners in their student's music education, and we ask that they abide by the following guidelines in supporting their musician's participation in YOP:

- Model positive, responsible behavior with regard to YOP commitments, and expect your student to do the same.
- Emphasize the importance of values like respect, preparedness, cooperation, and teamwork to ultimately foster musical improvement and enjoyment of the art form.
- Instill confidence in your student's musical ability by encouraging individual improvement rather than drawing comparisons to other student musicians.
- Support your student's individual ownership and responsibility for musical excellence through the use of respectful collaboration and communication with YOP staff, conductors, and peers.

Parents/guardians, conductors, YOP staff, and student musicians are considered members of a team dedicated to the musical development of the ensemble. Parents/guardians who do not abide by the values outlined above jeopardize their student's participation in YOP.

## YOP ORIENTATION

**A virtual YOP orientation will be held on Zoom at the start of the season for all parents/guardians AND students in the Youth Orchestra Program.** This meeting will cover important policies and calendar items. Please check your email for more details regarding our Fall 2024 orientation.

## PARENT/GUARDIAN REPRESENTATIVES

Parent/Guardian Representatives are a vital component to the success of YOP. Parent Representatives are present at every virtual rehearsal to assist with attendance and address any technical issues that may arise. 90% tuition assistance will be granted for one child of the Parent Representative in YOP for the current year. If you are interested in becoming a Parent Representative, please contact the YOP team.

### 3 Youth Community Strings (YCS)

## CONTACT INFO AND COMMUNICATION

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An email will be sent each Monday with information about what students are learning in the coming week, recapping lessons from the previous week, and reminding families of any upcoming events.

**Classroom Phone** – (804) 630-3351 (for contact during program hours)

**Caitlin Barry** – Program Manager & Lead Teacher

[YCStrings@richmondsymphony.com](mailto:YCStrings@richmondsymphony.com) or (804) 788-4717, ext. 153

**Anita Williams** – Co-Teacher & Education Coordinator

[awilliams@richmondsymphony.com](mailto:awilliams@richmondsymphony.com)

**Walter Bitner** – Director of Education & Community Engagement

[wbitner@richmondsymphony.com](mailto:wbitner@richmondsymphony.com)

**Warren Prescott** – Owner, A to B Kid Shuttle

[wprescott@atobkidshuttle.com](mailto:wprescott@atobkidshuttle.com)

**Connie Ruffin** – Fleet Supervisor & Logistics Coordinator, A to B Kid Shuttle

[cyruffin@gmail.com](mailto:cyruffin@gmail.com)



Photo by James H Loving Photography.

# DAILY SCHEDULE

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Youth Community Strings will meet every Tuesday through Friday from 3:30 to 5:00 pm during the academic year. Please see the 2024–25 calendar [at this link](#) for details. If RPS closes or cancels after school activities for inclement weather or any other reason, Youth Community Strings will also be canceled. Families will be notified by email as soon as possible.

## SAMPLE SCHEDULE

Students will participate in violin classes every day that Youth Community Strings meets. In addition, students will have the opportunity to eat a snack, play, and participate in other musical activities and experiences.

Here is a sample schedule of what a day at Youth Community Strings may look like:

**3:30:** Arrival — snack and outdoor play

**3:45–4:30:** Daily group violin class

**4:30–5:00:** Other enrichment activities (singing, drum classes, music theory, games, etc.)

**5:00:** Dismissal

## SNACK

Students will be served a snack upon arrival to Youth Community Strings. If a student in the program has a diagnosed food allergy, that food will not be included in the menu for any students.

## CLASS LOCATION

The Saint Paul's Baptist Church (South Campus)

700 East Belt Boulevard

Richmond, VA 23224

There are two available parking lots off Welton Avenue (see [pg. 25](#)).

Classes take place in the Education Building, which is the building closest to the intersection of Welton Avenue and Hull Street. This building is locked at all times.

Saint Paul's has generously shared their outstanding facilities with Youth Community Strings and we are grateful for their partnership. The south campus at Saint Paul's offers an education wing with several classroom spaces to practice and learn in, a large gymnasium to play and share meals in, and a sanctuary to perform in.

# STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

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At Youth Community Strings, students will learn to practice:

## **Mutual Respect**

I will treat others with respect at all times and can expect to be treated with respect by others, at all times.

## **Attentive Listening**

When another is speaking, I listen. Listening means: not talking, not interrupting, not ignoring. We listen with our whole selves, not just our ears.

## **Kindness**

Actions or words that are unkind are unacceptable. We keep our hands to ourselves. We use positive language. No name calling, bullying, or physical aggression.

## **Best Effort**

In all activities and at each moment I will do my best. This applies to my work in class and my interactions with others.

These four practices are discussed and practiced daily. Youth Community Strings students serve as ambassadors for the program and the Richmond Symphony School of Music and are expected to act appropriately. Students' actions reflect on the entire program and organization. Expectations of students include good manners at all classes, field trips, and concerts, and respect for teachers, staff, drivers, rehearsal/concert facilities, and other students as well as their families.



Photo by James H Loving Photography.

# DISCIPLINE POLICY

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In the event students are not following these rules and expectations, YCS will follow the disciplinary steps listed below:

## **Step 1: Redirected by instructor in classroom**

If a student is disruptive in class in a way that does not put others' safety at risk (ie. speaking or playing out of turn), the instructor will address the student in a firm, constructive manner and redirect the student's focus.

## **Step 2: Asked to take a short break from classroom with YCS staff member**

If a student's disruptive behavior continues and is interfering with an instructor's ability to teach, the student will be asked to take a short break (ie. visit the calm down corner).

## **Step 3: Removed from class by YCS staff for the remainder of the day; phone call to parent/guardian**

If a student's disruptive behavior continues after Step 2, the student will be removed from class and will sit with a staff member for the remainder of the day. If a student ever becomes verbally aggressive or abusive while at programming, YCS faculty and staff members will immediately jump to this step. In both cases, a phone call will be made to parents/guardians to discuss constructive ways to address the behavior.

## **Step 4: Immediate call to parent/guardian, Removed from program for the day, and meeting held to discuss participation**

If at any point a student becomes physically aggressive creating safety concerns for the student or those surrounding the student, the student will be removed from class by YCS staff. An immediate phone call will be made to a parent/guardian to pick the student up, and a meeting will be held to discuss the student's future participation in YCS.

## **CELL PHONES & ELECTRONICS**

Students will not be permitted to use cell phones or other electronic devices during Youth Community Strings. Any need for communication can be directed through Youth Community Strings staff. For contact during program hours, call the classroom phone at (804) 630-3351.

# TRANSPORTATION

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Transportation is provided by A to B Kid Shuttle for students attending Westover Hills Elementary, Oak Grove-Bellemeade, and Redd Elementary. Transportation home within a 5 mile radius of Saint Paul's is also available. If needed, support to organize carpools will be provided. Please contact Warren Prescott or Connie Ruffin (see contact information on [pg. 20](#)) with any questions about transportation.

In the event a student cannot access their house at drop-off, the following steps will be taken:

The driver immediately notifies YCS staff (via GroupMe).

The driver resumes route and attempts drop-off again while still in the area or at the conclusion of the route.

In the meantime, YCS staff attempt communication with parents, guardians, and any other contacts listed for the student.

If the second drop-off attempt fails, the driver returns to the program site (The St. Paul's Baptist Church, South Campus) and delivers the student into the care of YCS staff.

**NOTE:** Communication between the driver and the Richmond Symphony staff (via GroupMe) at every step is expected. In the unlikely event a student is unwilling to return to the van, the driver must remain with the student and contact the Richmond Symphony staff.

After one incident as described above, of a student unable to access their house at drop off, the student will be placed on probation. Probation is a step before a student is dismissed from Youth Community Strings. The terms of the student's probation will outline how they need to improve in order to remain in the program.



## ARRIVAL

A to B will provide transportation from Redd, Westover Hills, and Oak Grove-Bellemeade to Saint Paul's by the start of our program at 3:30.

Students arriving by car should arrive no later than 3:30. Arriving a few minutes early is preferred! Caregivers should drop their students off in the parking lot off Welton Avenue, closest to the church on the south side of the building (see map below). **Note: this is a change from last year!**

Students will be signed in at the beginning of the program each day. Caregivers who are dropping off their students must sign in before leaving. Students should never be left unattended.

## DEPARTURE

Transportation home is available for students within a 5 mile radius of Saint Paul's and will be provided by A to B Kids Shuttle.

Students being picked up by caregivers must be picked up promptly at 5:00 pm. Caregivers will need to park and walk up to the classroom to receive their student by entering the Education Building using the door closest to Welton Avenue (see map below). Persons picking up must be listed on the enrollment paperwork and may be asked to provide ID.

Students must be signed out at the end of the program. Caregivers must sign out before leaving with their student.

Students may not stay at the program later than 5:00 pm for any reason. At 5:05, parents/guardians will be called and must arrange to have their child picked up by 5:10 pm. Pick ups at 5:10 pm or later will be considered "late pick ups." After 2 "late pick ups," the student will be placed on probation. Probation is one step before a student is dismissed from Youth Community Strings. The terms of the students' probation will outline how they need to improve in order to remain in the program.



# MEMBERSHIP AND ATTENDANCE

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Daily violin classes are cumulative, with each class building on and reinforcing skills previously learned. Attendance at each class is required. In the event that a student must miss class for any reason, the absence must be communicated and approved in advance of class. Absences can be communicated in person, by phone at (804) 788-4717, ex. 153, or via email [YCStrings@richmondsymphony.com](mailto:YCStrings@richmondsymphony.com). YCS staff will notify A to B Kid Shuttle if necessary of changes in transportation needs. If a child is absent without approval, parents/guardians will be called. If a child misses 3 consecutive classes or 5 (nonconsecutive) classes during the year, a parent conference will be scheduled to assess the child's need for remediation. Chronic absences may result in probation. Probation is a step before a student is dismissed from Youth Community Strings. The terms of the students' probation will outline how they need to improve in order to remain in the program.

## WEATHER AND CANCELLATION POLICY

Youth Community Strings will follow Richmond Public Schools' inclement weather policy. When the public schools are closed or have early-release due to poor weather conditions, classes will be canceled. Classes will be held on their normal schedule if schools are simply delayed. Parents/guardians will be notified of all weather-related cancellations via email as soon as possible.

## PROBATION AND LOSS OF PLACEMENT

Participation in Youth Community Strings is an honor. There is a waitlist of students hoping for the opportunity to join the program. Students and parents/guardians should be aware that repeated absences, tardiness, or serious and/or continued policy violations are all grounds for review. The first step will be a conference with parents/guardians. When necessary, students will be placed on probation. Probation is a step before a student is dismissed from YCS. The terms of the students' probation will outline how they need to improve in order to remain in the program. If terms are not met or if parents/guardians fail to participate in scheduled conferences, the student may be dismissed from the program.

## INSTRUMENTS

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Instruments and all needed supplies for Youth Community Strings will be provided. Instruments belong to the program and will remain on site unless otherwise communicated. Renting an instrument to keep at home is not required, though some families chose to do so (please ask YCS staff for recommendations before renting an instrument).

Students in their second year of classes and beyond are eligible to borrow a YCS instrument for the weekend (starting on Friday after class until class on Tuesday). Before borrowing an instrument, students need to complete all the necessary paperwork (Care of Instrument Assessment, Permission Form signed by caregivers, Information Form signed by school classroom teacher). Families may be asked to cover repair costs or replacements of the instrument. Borrowing instruments is optional.

Students are expected to handle their instruments with care and will be taught daily in their classes how to handle and maintain their instruments. Something to note about playing a stringed instrument is that musicians must keep their fingernails short. Long fingernails will wear the violin strings more quickly and make it hard to hold the instrument properly. Each family will be provided a new pair of nail clippers at the beginning of their first year with YCS. A weekly nail trimming routine is suggested. Issues with improper care of the instrument may result in probation. Probation is a step before a student is dismissed from Youth Community Strings. The terms of the students' probation will outline how they need to improve in order to remain in the program. Families may be asked to cover repair costs or replacements of the instrument.



Photo by James H Loving Photography.

# MISCELLANEOUS POLICIES

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## DRESS CODE FOR PERFORMANCES AND FIELD TRIPS

Students will be provided a white Youth Community Strings polo shirt to wear for special occasions. These can be kept at home or remain in the classroom. Advance notice will be given anytime students will need to wear their polo shirts or any other uniform. If other clothing is required (for example, dark colored pants), these will be provided to families as needed.

## SCHOOL PARTICIPATION

Youth Community Strings is very proud to support in-school music education. When offered, every student is required to participate in their respective school orchestra program.

## VOLUNTEERING

Volunteers support YCS in a variety of ways and through a number of roles depending on interest and experience:

- Assisting teachers during program hours. These volunteers commit to one consistent day each week or serve as “floaters” when coverage is needed. (Background check required)
- Extra hands during special events, performances, and field trips
- Sharing their talents by sharing a demonstration with our students—on an instrument or through other relevant experience
- Assisting drivers by monitoring van routes
- Behind the scenes work, outside of program hours in a variety of ways! For example, preparing materials for lessons, moving equipment, etc.

Families are encouraged to suggest their own ways to contribute and talents to share with the program.