



## Member's Handbook 2016-2017

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## **Statement of Purpose**

Gold Coast Youth Orchestra is a 501(c)(3) non-profit music education program whose mission is to nurture the musical abilities of talented youth in South Florida and inspire them by providing high quality professional instruction and varied performance opportunities in chamber orchestra and ensemble settings. Our commitment to musical excellence fosters our members' lifelong love of music and our performances benefit the cultural vitality of the community regardless of race, creed, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation or economic circumstances by offering the opportunity to build self-esteem through proficiency and commitment.

## **I) Membership**

GCYO invites all young musicians who play string orchestral instruments from second grade through college undergraduate level to audition for membership. Membership shall be decided through an audition. Playing ability, musical maturity and balance of instrumentation shall be the determining factors in the selection of members and placement within the orchestra. Membership is not automatically renewed. All orchestra members are expected to maintain the established standards of the organization, including a positive attitude, professional commitment to the orchestra, fellow students and GCYO staff, and have good attendance. All GCYO members are required to participate in their school orchestra music program if one exists. Home-schooled students are exempt. All orchestra members are encouraged to take private music lessons with a professional, qualified string teacher.

## **II) Communication and Contact Information**

Communication is very important and can be challenging at times, as we only rehearse once a week during the school year. Check the GCYO website, Facebook page and your personal e-mail frequently for scheduling changes and updates. Please make sure we always have your current e-mail address and phone numbers.

## **III) Music, Instruments and Required Equipment**

Practice parts are distributed for educational purposes only to each student via e-mail. Students should print a copy for their personal practice and bring their practice parts to rehearsals to mark bowings, fingerings or changes their conductor makes so they are practicing what is taught in rehearsal. Orchestra folders and music used at rehearsals are turned in at the end of each rehearsal. Do not take the folders or the music in the folders home. Each student is required to bring their own instrument and bow, rosin, mute, accessories and an extra set of strings to every rehearsal and concert. Students are responsible for the care, maintenance, handling and treatment of their instruments and equipment at all times, including breaks, rehearsals and at performances. Please place your instrument and bow in a safe location so another student (or yourself) can't knock them over. GCYO will not be held responsible for any damage whatsoever that occurs to student's instruments while on rehearsal or concert properties.

## **IV) Student Conduct and Responsibilities**

GCYO's staff expects and fosters a high level of maturity in the students. All students, especially section leaders/principal players are encouraged to mentor and assist in the development of the other players in their sections. All students are expected to maintain a professional deportment and be courteous, supportive and respectful of other students, the conductors, GCYO staff, parents and family members, and their immediate environment. Please remember that while you are at rehearsals and concerts you are an ambassador of GCYO and your behavior and appearance should at all times be a reflection of the high standards set for the orchestra. This includes all GCYO sponsored activities and virtual media including Facebook and other social media.

- Proper behavior and etiquette are required at all times.
- Repetitious disruptive behavior during rehearsals will not be tolerated and could result in dismissal from the rehearsal, or ultimately dismissal from the orchestra without a refund, at the discretion of the GCYO staff.
- Foul language and obscene gestures do not belong in this or any other organization.
- Discrimination, bullying, harassment or criticism will not be tolerated at any time. This is a ZERO TOLERANCE policy and will be strictly enforced. Any student engaging in these negative behaviors will be counselled by GCYO staff on the first incident; a parent conference will happen with the 2<sup>nd</sup> incident; and the student could be dismissed from the orchestra on the 3<sup>rd</sup> incident with no refund.
- Students are not permitted to leave the rehearsal areas during breaks.
- Students are not permitted to leave the rehearsal during scheduled rehearsal time without advance notification to their conductor or GCYO staff.
- No refreshments, including gum, are allowed in rehearsals except during break time.
- Respect the rehearsal hall by picking up around your chair. This includes personal belongings and litter.
- Cell phones are not allowed in rehearsals or at concerts. Please silence and store your phone in your instrument case, purse or pocket for the entire rehearsal. This policy is strictly enforced by the conductors, who have the authority to confiscate cell phones for the duration of rehearsal if necessary.

#### **V) Parent/Guardian Responsibilities**

Please make every effort to have your child to rehearsal at least 15-20 minutes ahead of time as well as arriving for on time pickup at the end of rehearsal. We are committed to beginning and ending on time and will be diligent in doing so if everyone arrives on time. If for any reason we plan an extended rehearsal or add a sectional rehearsal, we will let you know in advance. We respect your time and commitment to GCYO, and place a very high value on families and family time. Please extend the same level of courtesy to us and do your best to be punctual.

Please become actively involved through volunteer support. Parents and family members are very important in contributing to the success of the organization. Participate in the following ways to support the orchestra and your child:

- Encourage your child to practice diligently and maximize what they learn at private lessons and rehearsals. Have regular and punctual attendance at rehearsals and concerts.
- Contribute to the orchestra with active participation in fund raisers, or share any special skills or talents you have which could benefit the organization.
- Attend and actively participate at GCYO parent meetings. We invite you to remain at rehearsals so you can see and hear what you child is learning. Attend all concerts with enthusiasm.

#### **VI) Attendance and Tardiness Policy**

In keeping with the purpose of GCYO to provide a high quality musical experience, it is the belief of GCYO's staff that ALL students are responsible to their colleagues, their conductor, themselves, and ultimately to the music itself. As a member of GCYO, it is the responsibility of each student to:

- Attend all rehearsals and performances.
- Arrive at least 15-20 minutes before the start of any rehearsal and sign the attendance sheet when you walk in.
- Be in their seat tuned and warmed up 5 minutes before rehearsal begins.
- Have practiced and learned their music between each rehearsal.

An orchestra is a dynamic and unique team requiring faithful attendance for all members. As a member of GCYO, you are making a real commitment to your orchestra. Each ensemble's success is heavily dependent on regular attendance from everyone. When you are absent from a rehearsal, not only are you missing out on important musical details that you can't obtain by practicing on your own, but you are also creating a hole in the group that cannot be filled or fixed in any way. Tardiness creates a disruption to rehearsals and forces the conductor to stop what they are doing to tune late arrivals. This causes us to lose valuable time and rehearsals start late.

We understand that other events or conflicting commitments are going to happen occasionally and we expect that members will use their best judgment and honor their commitment to GCYO on Saturdays when making important decisions about other commitments.

There are 2 types of absences; excused or unexcused. An excused absence is one in which you give us advanced notification of a conflict so we can plan on you not being there. An unexcused absence is when you don't show up without letting us know in advance. It is our hope that all of our students will be responsible and courteous by giving us advanced notification if they are going to miss a rehearsal.

Excused absences include:

- 1) Mandatory academic school requirements.
- 2) ACT/SAT testing. However, students should make every effort to come to rehearsal after the test.
- 3) School orchestra requirements which conflict with GCYO rehearsals (with the exception of a dress rehearsal or concert). Written notification is required from the school orchestra director.
- 4) Private school Spring Break dates that do not align with Broward County Public Schools and GCYO Spring Break .
- 5) Serious illness, injury or family emergency.

With the exception of #5 above, parent or legal guardian should notify the GCYO staff at least a week in advance via e-mail to [info@gcyo-fl.org](mailto:info@gcyo-fl.org) or text to 954-290-5082 for excused absences to be honored.

### **Weekly Rehearsals – Attendance & Tardiness**

**Attendance:** Members are allowed 2 absences per semester (September -December, and January - May).

Once a member obtains their third absence of the semester, no matter what the reason, they are placed in a probationary status and the parent will be contacted for a consultation. Students on probation become ineligible for community service hours, may be reseated in their section, may be excluded from performances or dismissed from the orchestra with no refund. All decisions will be made by the Conductor, Artistic Director and Board Chairperson; and will be final.

Students who have lost their seat due to attendance and are placed on probation may be given their seat back and removed from probationary status at the discretion of their conductor if the attendance issue is corrected and the student displays they know their music.

**Tardiness:** Students are expected to be in their seat warming up and ready to go 5 minutes prior to the beginning of rehearsal. Anything other than this is considered to be tardy. Late arrivals will sit at the back of section for the entire rehearsal on days that they are tardy. Once a member is tardy 3 times they will be given a warning, placed in a probationary status and the parent will be contacted for a consultation in an attempt to correct the situation. The same terms apply as stated in the attendance policy.

### **Dress Rehearsals and Concerts**

All dress rehearsals and concerts are mandatory for all members. The only exceptions will be a conflicting school orchestra concert, serious illness, injury or family emergency. In the event of a conflicting school orchestra concert, the student/parent must provide GCYO with a written letter from their school orchestra director at a minimum of four weeks in advance, confirming the conflict. Students who are tardy or miss a dress rehearsal may not participate in that concert at the conductor's discretion. Missing a concert for any reason other than a conflicting school orchestra concert, serious illness, injury or family emergency is grounds for immediate dismissal from the orchestra for the remainder of the season, with no refund. If for some reason, you know that you will not be able to participate in a particular concert, please let us know as early as possible, so we can make other arrangements to cover your part if necessary.

### **VII) Audition Requirements and Orchestral Seating**

GCYO recognizes the reality and importance of healthy competition within the group as a component of growth. As such, various positions of leadership are available for members who display exceptional talent and leadership qualities. All judgments pertaining to seating will be made as objectively as possible. As with most auditions, judgments for seating express an opinion based on musical ability and musical maturity. Age and previous status do not ensure the outcome of an audition. Music is a skill as well as an art. Personal diligence and preparedness are the best tools for achieving the desired results.

Please take note that:

- Seating auditions are mandatory.
- Conductors have the authority to make seating changes if they deem it necessary.
- Designated Principal and Assistant Principal Players are responsible for maintaining the highest standards of conduct and performance during rehearsals and concerts.
- Audition requirements are found on our web site: [http://gcyo-fl.org/the\\_program.html](http://gcyo-fl.org/the_program.html)

### **VIII) Concert Information**

When performing away from our rehearsal hall, each member is responsible for bringing their own equipment. Please remember that while you are at rehearsals and concerts you are an ambassador of GCYO and your behavior and appearance should at all times be a reflection of the high standards set for the orchestra.

#### **Concert Attire**

Unless otherwise specified this is the dress code for concerts:

Gentlemen: Solid black suit or tux. Long sleeve white dress shirt & black bow tie. Black socks, belt and black dress shoes. No white or colored socks. Hair should be neatly groomed.

Ladies: Solid black floor length gown, short or long sleeves are OK, or black dress slacks with solid black dress blouse, or black floor length dress skirt with solid black dress blouse. Absolutely NO halter tops or spaghetti straps. Appropriate dress black closed toe shoes. No sandals. No heels that you can't walk in or that will prevent you from sitting properly in your chair. No jewelry that interferes with your playing. Girls with long hair or bangs should adopt a style that prevents hair from falling in the face.

Deviation from the dress code may result in a player not being allowed to participate in a given performance. Decisions in this regard are at the discretion of GCYO's staff. No perfume, cologne or aftershave during rehearsals or performances.

#### Extra-Curricular Appearances

GCYO members and chamber ensembles may be invited to make appearances for promotions, fundraisers, news media, community concerts or other events. Students for small ensembles can be chosen at the conductor's discretion. At no time will any member or group represent GCYO publicly without the prior approval of the conductor and GCYO staff. Please do not create your own advertisements or literature for us. We will provide any printed literature as needed.

#### **IX) Financial Assistance**

It is our desire to allow any qualified student to become a member of the orchestra, regardless of personal financial situations. Partial financial aid to assist with tuition for year round members is available to those families who qualify and will be addressed privately and confidentially on an individual basis. The financial aid form is available upon request and is to be submitted at the time of applying for membership. Financial aid recipients are required to participate in all fund raisers to the full extent to help cover the cost of their tuition.

#### **X) Ensemble Fee and Fund Raising; A Two-Part Commitment for 2016-2017**

GCYO is a non-profit organization. Fundraising is essential and is a critical element towards the success and growth of the organization which helps provide and cover the costs of the artistic staff, music, supplies, rehearsal space, concert halls, insurance, and more. We make every effort to keep tuition as low as possible. As a result we rely on sponsorships, donations and ticket sales twice a year to help offset expenses. We sacrifice fundraising at 2 concerts each year (for both orchestras) so we can award community service hours to students; therefore ticket sales are mandatory for the remaining concerts. Ticket prices are very affordable and we encourage families to sell them to family and friends, neighbors and business associates, so you are not paying out of pocket for this fundraising activity. We believe that parents should not have to pay to see their child play, so each family gets 2 complimentary tickets for parents. In addition to the financial benefits from ticket sales, our young musicians work very hard and deserve to play to a full house with enthusiastic fans at every concert. We strive to do as many concerts in a year as we can so the students get as many performance opportunities as possible, and to promote GCYO and classical music in South Florida. The financial commitments for membership in 2016-2017 are:

- 1) Ensemble Fee will remain at \$430.00 for the 2016-2017 season. This does not include the String Orchestra Summer Program.
- 2) Fundraising Commitment: Each family is responsible for securing \$100.00 for both fundraising concerts in December and May from selling 10 tickets for each concert, gathering donations or independently writing a check for \$100.00 to cover the cost of the tickets. The total commitment is \$200.00 for the 2016-2017 season. All students are required to participate in our Annual Practice-a-thon Fundraiser.

All Gold Coast Youth Orchestra fees, including ensemble fees and charitable contributions are non-refundable and non-transferable.

## **XI) Community Service Hours**

GCYO helps students earn service hours for their high school graduation requirements. Some concerts are for service hours and some are for fundraising and the financial well-being of the orchestra at the discretion of GCYO's staff. Community service hours are awarded within the guidelines of the Broward County School Board. Students must submit paperwork to GCYO at least 2 weeks prior to the designated service concerts and are responsible for supplying enough pages to cover all rehearsals and the designated concert. This also applies for students submitting paperwork for National Junior Honor Society (NJHS). Late paperwork will not be accepted.

Students must perform in the designated concerts in order to earn service hours. Completed paperwork documenting hours worked will be given back to the students after they have fulfilled their obligation of performing in the concert. Students are responsible for making copies of filled out paperwork for safekeeping as a backup to your school records. GCYO does not maintain or archive service hours records.

High school seniors and members of National Junior Honor Society are responsible for knowing when their school deadlines are for submission of paperwork.

It is very important that students remember to sign in every week so we have accurate attendance records. Students who fail to sign in are considered absent and won't receive hours for that day.

Service hours are awarded only during the school year (Fall and Spring semesters) to members who are in good standing with GCYO. Service hours will not be given to students on probation for attendance or tardiness based on the conditions stated in the attendance policy.

## **XII) Rehearsal Schedule and location**

Our regular weekly rehearsals are on Saturday afternoon from 1:30 to 4:30

**Exceptions:** Sectionals may be scheduled at each conductor's discretion if the need should arise. Students will be notified of the date and time a week in advance if a sectional rehearsal is required.

All regularly scheduled rehearsals are at the address below. Please park on the west side of the building.

All Saints Lutheran Church  
7875 W. McNab Road  
Tamarac, FL. 33321

## **Cancellation of Rehearsal**

GCYO might cancel rehearsals due to hurricanes, inclement weather or conductor illness. In the event of a cancellation we will post notifications on GCYO's pages on Facebook and will also mass e-mail all members with the most up to date information that we have.

Find us on Facebook at Gold Coast Youth Orchestra where we have frequent postings.  
Voice Mail: 954-501-0401 / Visit our web page [www.gcyo-fl.org](http://www.gcyo-fl.org) / Email: [info@gcyo-fl.org](mailto:info@gcyo-fl.org)