

# Longmont Youth Symphony Handbook

## 2023-2024

### General Information

The purpose of the Longmont Youth Symphony is to provide a resource for young people wishing to further develop their musical abilities under the guidance of professional musicians. The LYS is a community-based musical organization featuring young musicians from the St. Vrain Valley and surrounding areas. LYS welcomes elementary, middle, and high school musicians to audition; students need not be Longmont residents. We are one organization which encompasses three individual ensembles:

**Longmont Youth Symphony Orchestra (LYSO):** Our top honors symphonic orchestra with our most advanced strings, winds, brass, and percussion players. This ensemble is under the direction of Mr. Keynes Chen. *Rehearsals take place every Saturday from 9:00 am - 12:00 pm.*

**Longmont Youth Strings Ensemble (LYSE):** A strings only ensemble. This ensemble is under the direction of Mr. Jonathan West. *Rehearsals take place every Saturday from 9:00 am - 10:30 am.*

**Longmont Youth Symphonic Band (LYSB):** A wind and brass ensemble. This ensemble is under the direction of Mrs. Carrie Borja. *Rehearsals take place every Saturday from 9:00 am - 10:30 am.*

### Summary of Family Requirements

Engagement from families is critical for the success of the Longmont Youth Symphony. As such, we have the following requirements for families (explained below):

- 1) Each family is expected to donate 5 volunteer hours each season
- 2) Tuition balances are due at the Parent Meeting at the first rehearsal  
*(Payment options and scholarships are available)*

### Family Participation

We depend on, and are grateful for, the dedication and hard work of our families! We have many opportunities for volunteers to lend their time and talents, including writing grant applications, seeking corporate and private sponsorships, LYS Board or Committee membership, and various ongoing fundraising activities. Successful fundraising helps to keep our tuition affordable. We encourage active volunteer participation to assist with the operation of the organization and the ensembles.

***Five volunteer hours are expected per season, per family.*** Opportunities include:

- Season Finale Concert
- Side-by-Side Concerts

- Board of Directors / Committee Membership
- “Muffin Morning” Donation
- LYSO Retreats
- Providing in-kind services to LYS such as photography, graphic design, etc.
- Securing concert sponsorship or other monetary donations to LYS
- Food and/or Refreshment Donation for concerts and other LYS events

If you are not able to volunteer, a \$50 per hour (\$250 for the season) cash donation allows your family to opt-out of volunteer service.

## LYS Philosophy

The Youth Symphony provides a resource for young musicians to further develop and excel in their musical abilities through the guidance of professional leadership and direction. By doing so, we enable our youth to entertain, educate, and expand appreciation for music within the community.

## Placement Philosophy

The Music Directors methodically make placement decisions based on playing ability and the current needs of each ensemble. Students are ranked by audition and placed in the ensemble most closely matching their musical skills, including superiority of tone, technical ability, intonation, vibrato, dynamic contrast, range, articulation, phrasing, rhythmic integrity, expressive style, and overall accuracy.

It is important to note that **simply meeting the printed requirements of an ensemble does not guarantee placement.** Striving to provide the best educational experience for students, we take a holistic look at each audition and determine the most suitable placement for cultivating growth. Regardless of which ensemble students perform with, they all experience the richness of LYS’s unique and meaningful educational approach.

*LYS does not discriminate on the basis of race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, or gender identity/expression.*

## Member Expectations

Admission to all LYS ensembles is based on audition. Check the website for up-to-date audition criteria. Applicants may be asked to re-audition on a later date if the Audition Committee believes that additional technical proficiency is needed. The Music Director makes the final decisions with input from the Audition Committee.

LYS acknowledges the indispensable role that community schools play in providing students with the desire, interest, and musical development necessary to participate in an honors orchestra. To that end, it is the intent of the LYS that every member who attends a school that offers music programs participate in those programs. We recognize that extenuating circumstances will sometimes occur. In this case, we ask the student and parent to write a statement to the LYS Board explaining the reasons they may be unable to participate in such a

program. The Board will review the statement, may ask to speak to the member directly, and will notify the member of its decision.

Once the music has been assigned, you are expected to learn your part prior to the next rehearsal. Technically difficult sections may be identified for special attention, and you are encouraged to take the music to your private teachers. Remember, rehearsal is not where you learn your parts but rather where ensemble playing is perfected and music is created. **Please note that LYSO musical selections will be posted on our website at least one week prior to each concert cycle for members to [download](#) and print.** Members are expected to be well prepared for the first rehearsal of each concert cycle.

You will be challenged with difficult music over the course of the season. The Music Directors strongly advise that you seek the assistance of your private music teachers to help you learn your parts. It is recommended that all members study privately with a qualified teacher. If you are not currently taking private lessons, LYSO would be happy to refer you to qualified teachers.

## Rehearsal Preparation and Responsibility

Rehearsals begin promptly at 9:00 am. Students are expected to be in their seats at least five minutes prior to the start of rehearsal to set-up, tune their instruments, and be prepared to start rehearsing at 9:00.

- All members are expected to come prepared to rehearsal with a pencil including an eraser, instrument, and their own music.
- All members are expected to regularly attend rehearsals.
- All members are expected to pay attention to all music directors during rehearsal.
- All members are expected to show respect and courtesy towards conductors, coaches, chaperones, staff members, and other orchestra members.
- Most importantly, members are expected to have fun!

## LYSO Seating Philosophy

There will be at least one chair audition prior to each concert cycle (excluding special concerts, i.e. the Side-by-Side concerts and the July 4th concert). The Music Director, on the basis of playing ability demonstrated at chair auditions, will assign principals, assistant principals, and seating for the remaining section players. A successful audition does not always guarantee placement in the front of the section. Strong players are often intermixed throughout the section.

Any member missing a chair audition will be seated at the back of their section for the remainder of that concert cycle. If multiple members from one section miss an audition, it is up to the Music Director, based on their best judgment of those members' performance abilities, to determine the seating of those members for the duration of that concert cycle.

If you must miss a seating audition, a live online audition may be counted as a valid chair audition with the approval of the Music Director. The online audition must be conducted **prior** to the actual chair audition date.

Members are urged to remember that all players are essential to the quality of the orchestra and that seating placement does not reflect a member's ability and value. Players having any questions or concerns with their seating should talk with the conductor. Every attempt will be made to resolve seating problems to the satisfaction of all involved parties. The final decision on all seating matters rests with the Music Director.

## Concert Preparation and Responsibility

Our goal is to make excellent music together. All Longmont Youth Symphony ensembles are honors-level. In large part, the quality of an orchestra is determined by the quality of its participants—individual musicians. Therefore, each musician must be committed to working together in order to make excellent music as a whole. We have high expectations of our student musicians; we require a high level of responsibility, discipline, and dedication to being prepared for concerts. The Music Director reserves the right to remove you from a concert cycle if they feel your preparation level does not meet expectations.

## Concerts and Dress Code

Concerts represent the culmination of our members' work. It is important that members have mastered their music and carry themselves in a professional manner. To that end, members are to be on stage and seated by five minutes prior to the concert.

Orchestra members are expected to wear concert dress at our Winter, Spring and Finale Concerts:

- LYSO, LYSB, and LYSE: black shirt, black skirt/pants, black hosiery, black shoes and black socks. Skirts and dresses should be knee length or longer.

The Music Director will review concert etiquette (e.g., dress, tuning order, etc.) prior to each concert. If you are unsure whether your outfit is appropriate, please ask in advance.

## Attendance

Attendance is expected at all rehearsals. The participation of all orchestra members in every rehearsal is critical in the preparation for the orchestra's performance. While it is recognized that there may be times where there is a scheduling conflict, all absences can adversely affect the preparation of the orchestra as a whole.

### **Attendance at dress rehearsals is mandatory for concert participation.**

Two absences in a concert cycle will result in the musician having to re-audition for the Music Director for that concert. Three absences may disqualify the player from the upcoming concert. Late arrivals and early dismissals from dress rehearsals are not permitted.

All absences, tardiness, or early dismissal for legitimate reasons must be presented via the absentee form to the Music Director at least two weeks in advance. LYS supplies these forms

on the [website](#).

Absences due to illness or emergency must be reported to the Administrator before the beginning of said rehearsal or performance.

More than two unexcused absences in a season may be grounds for dismissal from the orchestra. Note that tardiness or absence due to misreading (or not reading) the schedule will be considered unexcused.

## Tuition

Tuition covers only a portion of the overall operating expenses for the LYS organization. The remaining funding comes from grants, donations and fundraising activities. Tuition for each ensemble is determined by the LYS Board of Directors.

- Tuition details can be found here:  
<https://www.longmontyouthsymphony.org/tuition-details>
- Tuition balance for the full season is due on the date of the first rehearsal. There will be a late fee of \$25 charged for any tuition balances not accounted for by the second rehearsal.
- Payment options are available. Please [contact the Administrator](#) for details.
- Tuition is non-refundable.

The LYS Board does not want its fees to prevent qualified students from playing in the orchestra. A scholarship fund is available through the Spreading the Harmony Program to those who qualify. [Forms and deadlines can be found by visiting our website.](#)

## Lost Music Fees for Original Music

If original sheet music is provided, each musician will be held responsible for these parts. The student may be charged for each lost and/or damaged non-public-domain original part.

## Contact Information

If you need to contact the Longmont Youth Symphony, please [check the website](#) for the most up-to-date contact information.

# Acknowledgement

This form can also be filled out online at:

[Handbook Acknowledgement Form — Longmont Youth Symphony](#)

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As a member/parent/guardian of the Longmont Youth Symphony, I have read, understand and agree to follow the guidelines, terms and expectations set out in the Handbook.

I agree to actively participate in activities/events in support of the Longmont Youth Symphony, such as ticket sales, fundraising, logistics, direction and/or other, whenever possible.

I have read and understand the above:

Member's Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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## Tuition and Fees Acknowledgement

As a member/parent/guardian of the Longmont Youth Symphony, I have read, understand, and agree to the tuition and fee guidelines set out by the LYS.

I acknowledge that all monies paid to the Longmont Youth Symphony are non-refundable for any reason.

I have read and understand the above:

Member's Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_