

**WBMS Orchestra**  
**James Barket, Director**  
[WBMS Orchestra Website](#)

Dear Parents;

Practice is very important for your child's progress in orchestra. With your help, your child will commit to a regular practice schedule. All students should own a copy of our book: Essential Elements 2000 for Strings. (6<sup>th</sup> grade—book 1; 7<sup>th</sup> grade--book 2; and 8<sup>th</sup> grade--book 3) In addition, I recommend securing a book of melodies for your child's instrument. Several good ones are available at local stores (Suzuki; Beautiful Music for Two String Instruments; Strictly Classics, as well as volumes of popular melodies from movies, etc.) Below is a good routine for a 30 minute practice session. Many young students, however, need an even more specific approach. I suggest asking your child to master a certain number of melodies per week (5-8 is a good number). These can be from any of the books mentioned above. Please take a few minutes to listen to at least 3-4 of these melodies each week. After doing this, please verify by signing below. Thank you!

This is a general outline for a good 30-minute practice routine.

1. Warm-up with scales (any scale that you have memorized—try to do a different one each day)
  - A. Play long tones and listen for intonation and check position for both left and right hands. Is bow always T-shaped to string? Is left wrist pulled out straight? Are left-hand fingers curved? Are both left and right hands relaxed and flexible?
  - B. After scales, play something that you know well and that you like. But do this only for a few minutes and check your position.  
(Warm-up should be about 5-8 minutes)
  
2. Go over material that is difficult.
  - A. Make certain that you practice coordination! Know your fingering cold and work out all shifts and string crossings. In general, this is how things should work: Your left-hand notes should be in place first. Next your bow should engage the string, and finally the bow pulls. Practice fast passages slow with quick preparation! Work out tricky bowings and rhythms with bow alone on an open string.  
(This should take about 10-12 minutes)
  
3. Review selected material.
  - A. This should include some of the difficult material you worked on the day before and today. In addition, you should end your practice with a piece that you like and that demonstrates your best playing. Do not end practice with the same piece every day, however.  
(Review should take about 8-10 minutes)

Your individual practice routine may differ from this, and you are not limited to 30 minutes. However, the above is intended to serve as an outline to help those who may not be practicing as efficiently as they could.

Practice Verification

\_\_\_\_\_ My child \_\_\_\_\_ has performed 3-4 different melodies for me each week during this practice period.

\_\_\_\_\_ My child \_\_\_\_\_ has not completed the practice requirements

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date