



ALBUQUERQUE YOUTH
SYMPHONY PROGRAMSM

Musician's Handbook For AYSP Elementary String Project [2026-2027]

The Musician's Handbook serves as a reference for all things AYSP for students in the Elementary String Project. Parents and students are strongly encouraged to review it carefully at the beginning of the season and refer to it as needed throughout the year.

Updated: 8/1/26

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CONTACTS AND LOCATION

Albuquerque Youth Symphony Program (AYSP)
Office: 4407 Menaul Blvd NE, Albuquerque, NM 87110
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505 875 1319 • www.aysmusic.org

REFERENCES AND ABBREVIATIONS

AYSP	Albuquerque Youth Symphony Program	
YS	Youth Symphony	High School Ensemble
YO	Youth Orchestra	High School Ensemble
YCO	Youth Concert Orchestra	High School Ensemble
JS	Junior Symphony	Middle School Ensemble
JO	Junior Orchestra	Middle School Ensemble
JSO	Junior String Orchestra	Middle School Ensemble
JB	Junior Band	Middle School Ensemble
PSO	Preparatory String Orchestra	Elementary School Ensemble
ESP II	Elementary String Project Level 2	Elementary School Ensemble
ESP I	Elementary String Project Level 1	Elementary School Ensemble

ARTISTIC STAFF

Dan Whisler	Youth Symphony (YS) Conductor	dan@aysmusic.org
Rafael Videira	Youth Orchestra (YO) Conductor	rafael@aysmusic.org
David Jennison	Youth Concert Orchestra (YCO) Conductor	david@aysmusic.org
Hovey Corbin	Junior Symphony (JS) Co-Conductor	corbin@aa.edu
Kristen Lucero	Junior Symphony (JS) Co-Conductor	kristen@aysmusic.org
Frank Slife	Junior Orchestra (JO) Co-Conductor	frank@aysmusic.org
Brennan Wright	Junior Orchestra (JO) Interim Co-Conductor	brennan.wright@rrps.net
Emily Awes	Junior String Orchestra (JSO) Conductor	emily@aysmusic.org
Josephine Gonzales	Junior Band (JB) Co-Conductor	josephine.gonzales@rrps.net
Mason Yordy	Junior Band (JB) Co-Conductor	mason.yordy@aps.edu
Gloria Velasco	Preparatory String Orchestra (PSO) Conductor	gloria@aysmusic.org
Patricia Morrison	Elementary String Project: Level 2 (ESP II) Instructor	patricia@aysmusic.org
Karen Schindwolf	Elementary String Project: Level 1 (ESP I) Instructor	karen@aysmusic.org

ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

Norlynn Blocker Price	Executive Director	norlynn@aysmusic.org
Dan Whisler	Music Director	dan@aysmusic.org
Dorothy Whisler	Assistant Director	dorothy@aysmusic.org
Gloria Velasco	Elementary String Project Director, School Tour Coordinator	gloria@aysmusic.org
Howie George	Building Coordinator	howie@aysmusic.org
Victoria Blocker	Special Projects Coordinator	victoria@aysmusic.org

OFFICE HOURS

AYSP published office hours are M-Th, 2-6pm and Saturdays 9am – 12pm. The offices are closed on Fridays and Sundays. Other hours available by appointment.

COMMUNICATION

WEBSITE

Important information is posted on the website – www.aysmusic.org - including weekly schedules, updates, closures, and concert information. Please visit the website for information before calling the office.

SPECIFIC ENSEMBLE PAGES ON THE WEBSITE

Hover over the “Current Students” link in the top menu of our website homepage, and select the appropriate ensemble under the “Ensemble” and grade level sub-menus. The side menu of the ensemble page has links to the Season Calendar, Musician’s Handbook, Absence Request, and Tuition Information. The Musician’s Handbook and Absence Request can also be found under the “Current Students” menu.

READ & HEEDS - EMAIL

Read & Heeds are emailed notices about upcoming concerts and events. Information includes time of arrival, what to bring, what to wear, directions, where to park, etc. Students and parents are encouraged to check email frequently, so as not to miss important updates, and to make sure email settings allow receipt of email from Albuquerque Youth Symphony Program.

REHEARSAL NOTES - EMAIL

Rehearsal notes, sent by email, contain conductors’ observations on the previous rehearsal and guidance on areas to focus practice in the upcoming week. Rehearsal notes will usually be sent weekly by email, although timing may vary.

QUARTER NOTES - EMAIL

This e-newsletter is sent quarterly to all friends of AYSP and contains information on upcoming concerts, feature stories, and general interest information. Registered students and parents/guardians are automatically subscribed and can unsubscribe if desired.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Be sure to “like” the Albuquerque Youth Symphony Program on Facebook and also follow “aysmusic” on Instagram. We often post photos, talk about what’s happening at the AYSP building on a given day or about upcoming tours, community events, and fun updates whenever we are excited about something and want to share it with you!

SEASON CALENDARS

The Season Calendar for each ensemble can be found on individual ensemble pages on our website at www.aysmusic.org. [hover over the “Current Students” link in the top menu of our website. Select the appropriate ensemble under the “Ensemble” and “Elementary School” sub-menus. Click on the “Season Calendar” link on the right side of the page]

BUILDING SCHEDULE

The AYSP building entrance will unlock 30 minutes before rehearsal starts and will lock again 15 minutes after rehearsal begins. If a student must arrive late to rehearsal, a member of the AYSP staff or an ensemble parent manager will have to let the student into the building. The door will unlock 15 minutes before the end of rehearsal for family members to come into the building.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

ESP classes meet only twice each week, and students in ESP Level 1 do not take their instruments home with them. Therefore, students are discouraged from missing any rehearsals to the extent possible. Each ensemble functions at its best when all participants are prepared and present for all rehearsals.

If you know in advance that you will be unable to attend a rehearsal, tell us as soon as you know about it. This will make it possible for our conductors to better plan rehearsal time each week. All absences must be communicated in advance to your instructor **AND** reported online through our online absence request.

Please submit your absence requests and let your instructor know that you will be absent as far in advance as possible. This is an opportunity to discuss what you may need to do to catch up or alternative options.

Report the absence online: You must report the absence as soon as you are aware of it. Even if you have discussed your absence in advance with your instructor, you **MUST** submit the "Absence Request" form on our website at <https://aysmusic.org/absence-request> . **AYSP does not accept phone calls, email, or text messages to report absences.** (If you do not have access to the internet, please let us know so we can make alternate arrangements for you to report absences.)

What happens if I go over the allowed number of absences?

1. When you reach the maximum number of absences for your ensemble, you are considered to be on probation. If absences continue, you may be dismissed from the program at the discretion of your instructor and the Music Director.
2. When we are forced to consider your possible dismissal from the program, your communication with your conductor and timely reporting of absences will be taken into consideration. Conductors require verification of the reason for absences over the maximum allowed (e.g., a note from school, conductor, or doctor).

INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY

AYSP does not take lightly the decision to cancel a scheduled rehearsal or other activity due to inclement or severe weather. However, when snow, ice, heavy rain, or other severe weather conditions make for hazardous driving conditions, we want our students, families and employees to be safe.

In general, AYSM will follow Albuquerque Public Schools' lead in determining whether scheduled activities will take place. Thus, if APS cancels classes for the day or calls for early dismissal due to severe weather, all scheduled AYSM activities for that day will also be canceled. *Note: a delayed start time by APS, without further cancelations, will NOT affect scheduled AYSM activities, which will take place as scheduled.* Notwithstanding AYSM holding rehearsals as scheduled, students who live in an area (such as the East Mountains) where driving conditions are hazardous are urged to exercise discretion in traveling to AYSM and will be excused from rehearsal if they opt not to risk driving.

If your student does not attend an APS school and his or her school cancels classes for the day or dismisses early due to weather conditions, your student is excused from a scheduled AYSM activity for that day.

With respect to scheduled AYSM activities taking place on Saturday or Sunday, AYSM will send a Read & Heed to affected students and parents as soon as possible to advise whether the activity will take place as scheduled.

When in doubt, contact AYSP by phone (505) 875-1319 or by email at ays@aysmusic.org to find out whether your student's rehearsal is taking place as scheduled.

BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS

AYSP students are representatives of the Albuquerque Youth Symphony Program and must conduct themselves in a manner that reflects positively on AYSP at all times. Specifically, they must:

1. Demonstrate appropriate, respectful behavior toward AYSP staff, fellow students and audience, parents and officials at all performance and rehearsal venues.
2. Be punctual and prepared for all rehearsals, meetings, performances, camps, and/or scheduled events related to AYSP. Students not in their seat when tuning begins are considered late. Note to Parents and to students who transport themselves to rehearsals: Please don't arrive at the AYSP building at the last minute. It always takes a few extra minutes for musicians to check in, set up and prepare to rehearse, and this preparation time should not come at the expense of other students who are ready to begin rehearsal on time. Please help your student participate fully in the rehearsal or performance by allowing sufficient time to get to the rehearsal on time.
3. Listen to instruction from the conductor. Do not talk while conductors are on the podium.
4. **Turn off and put away – out of sight and out of reach - all electronic devices during all rehearsals and performances.**
5. Use facilities properly, keeping the buildings clean and ensuring that AYSP property is returned upon request and in good condition.
6. Abide by any dress and grooming standards set by AYSP staff and conductors for the particular AYSP ensemble or activity.

Prohibited activities while on AYSP property and during any AYSP activity include:

1. Engaging in any conduct that deprives another person of the exercise of personal rights and responsibilities, or engaging in any conduct which disrupts any AYSP activity.
2. Engaging in hazing, harassment or bullying of others.
3. Causing or attempting to cause damage to any school facility or private property; or stealing or attempting to steal.
4. Causing or attempting to cause physical injury to any person or behaving in such a way as could reasonably cause physical injury to another person or themselves.
5. Possessing, handling or transmitting any object that could reasonably be considered a weapon.
6. Engaging in buying, selling, giving, delivering, using, possessing, or being under the influence of tobacco, alcohol, marijuana, a controlled substance (without a prescription), or a dangerous drug at any time and regardless of whether the student is on AYSP property or at an AYSP related activity.
7. Violating any applicable local, state or federal laws, or the applicable laws of other countries, or any AYSP rules or policies.

If an AYSP conductor, staff member and/or any chaperone determines that a student has engaged in any prohibited activities during any AYSP activity, the student will immediately be sent home. The parent/guardian will be financially responsible for any damages or expenses that result from the student engaging in any prohibited activity, and the student will be dismissed as a participant in any AYSP activities. Tuition will be non-refundable.

PHOTOGRAPHY/VIDEO RELEASE

Parents and legal guardians, by enrolling their child(ren) in AYSP, consent for their child(ren) to be photographed and/or filmed while participating in activities that can include, but are not limited to: rehearsals, boot camps, tours, performances and special events. AYSP reserves the right to use images or footage for program and marketing purposes that may include, but are not limited to: social media,

newsletters, collateral materials, and advertisements. Please contact the Executive Director if this presents a concern for your student or family.

DRESS CODE FOR PERFORMANCES

Elementary String Project

Girls and Boys Uniform

Program T-Shirt (provided to students during the fall semester), nice jeans (no rips or holes), slacks or skirt (hem must fall to the knee or below), nice tennis shoes, shoes, or sandals.

ELIGIBILITY

1. Students in youth instrumental ensembles must be in grades 9-12 and 14 years old as of September 1, 2026. Students in junior instrumental ensembles must be in grades 6-8 and 11 years old as of September 1, 2026. Students in preparatory instrumental ensembles must be in grades 4-5 and 9 years old as of September 1, 2026.
2. High school students may not participate in AYSP for more than four years, or after their 19th birthday, whichever comes first.
3. Dismissal from any public or private school will be viewed as a failure to participate in your school music program and will result in dismissal from AYSP.
4. AYSP follows NMAA academic eligibility guidelines. Students must maintain a GPA of 2.0 with no more than (1) F, based on a 4.0 grading scale or its equivalent. Academically ineligible students may not participate in rehearsals, tours, or concerts during the period of ineligibility.
5. Students must adhere to AYSP's School Music Participation Policy.
6. Student must adhere to AYSP's Attendance Policy.
7. Students must adhere to AYSP's Behavior Expectations.
8. Students must adhere to AYSP's Tuition and Fee Policy.
9. Students must adhere to AYSP's COVID-19 Policy.

TUITION ASSISTANCE

The Albuquerque Youth Symphony Program is committed to supporting any student in need of financial assistance for tuition or fees. All families in need of support at any level are encouraged to apply. Assistance is available for all expenses associated with tuition.

Applicants must fill out the Financial Aid Application and return to AYSP by the stated deadline each season. If your family's financial situation changes, tuition assistance may be available mid-season. Applicants will receive an award letter including a payment schedule and commitment form via e-mail before registration opens. Each application is assessed using a sliding scale of 25-90% of tuition cost, based upon federal HUD Low-to-Moderate Income (LMI) Guidelines.

2026-2027 ESP TUITION AND FEES

Ensemble	Tuition
Elementary String Project II (ESP II)	\$460
Elementary String Project I (ESP I)	\$345

TUITION PAYMENT OPTIONS

Parents/Guardians may select one of the following payment options at the time of registration. Please review the options carefully. Payments are accepted by check (make payable to AYSP), card, ACH, or E-check using our payment portal at <https://aysmusic.asapconnected.com/>. Payments made via card are subject to an additional credit card fee.

Option 1: One Payment

Pay in full at the time of registration

Option 2 (Full-year ensembles): Five Monthly Payments

Five (5) equal payments are due monthly August through December. Monthly payments must be made by card, ACH, or E-check and will be automatically charged each month.

TUITION PAYMENT SCHEDULE

Payment schedule options:

Elementary String Project II

	AMOUNT	PAYMENT DUE
OPTION 1	\$460	8/1/2026
OPTION 2	\$92	8/1/2026
	\$92	9/1/2026
	\$92	10/1/2026
	\$92	11/1/2026
	\$92	12/1/2026

Elementary String Project I

	AMOUNT	PAYMENT DUE
OPTION 1	\$345	8/1/2026
OPTION 2	\$69	8/1/2026
	\$69	9/1/2026
	\$69	10/1/2026
	\$69	11/1/2026
	\$69	12/1/2026

TUITION AND FEE POLICIES

Delinquent Accounts

Communication is critical. If you are struggling to make payments, please contact AYSP to discuss options. Lack of payment without communication may result in a student's suspension from AYSP activities. Families with delinquent accounts from a prior year must pay the past due balance before returning student(s) may audition for or be placed into an ensemble for the upcoming season. In addition, AYSP will assess a \$15 late fee for all delinquent accounts.

Refunds

Tuition and fees are non-refundable and non-transferable.

Returned Checks

A fee of \$35 will be applied for returned checks.

VOLUNTEERING

Active parent volunteers have always been part of the AYSP culture. With approximately 500 students supported by an administrative staff of four, parent volunteers are essential to the success of the program. Throughout the year there are numerous opportunities to get involved from just a few hours to a weekly commitment, including taking attendance and assisting conductors at rehearsals. Other parents contribute gift-in-kind services and goods that reduce expenses to the program.

We request that parents participate as volunteers to the extent they are able.

ESP VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES INCLUDE:

Parent Manager

Each ensemble has two to four Parent Managers who provide weekly assistance to the Conductor, students and their parents or guardians. Responsibilities throughout the year include:

- Coordinating parking and supervising students during rehearsal pick up and drop off
- Supporting rehearsals and concerts
- Taking attendance
- Distributing t-shirt's, etc.