



Oakville Symphony Youth Orchestra



**Membership Handbook
2026/2027 Season**

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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General Manager

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*Conductor,
Sinfonia and
Philharmonia*

Colin Clarke

*Artistic Director &
Conductor,
Chamber Orchestra
and Symphony*

A Message from our General Manager

Dear Musicians and Parents,

The OSYO welcomes its new and returning musicians to another exciting season of making music together!

As the OSYO continues to grow, our goal is to provide a progressive and inspiring musical experience for young musicians from across the western Greater Toronto Area. Our program is designed to foster musical development, confidence, and camaraderie through a combination of performances, chamber music opportunities, sectional rehearsals, and collaboration with professional musicians.

This season will feature three exciting concerts at the incredible Burlington Performing Arts Centre, giving our musicians the opportunity to perform on a professional stage in front of family, friends, and the wider community. In addition, some of our musicians will also have opportunities to perform in various venues around Oakville, providing valuable experience in smaller groups and allowing students to further develop their musicianship, listening skills, and confidence.

An important part of the OSYO experience is learning from and working alongside accomplished musicians. Sectional rehearsals throughout the season will give students the opportunity to receive focused coaching, strengthen their technical and ensemble skills, and gain insight from experienced performers and educators.

Your commitment to the OSYO is an important part of our shared success. This handbook outlines our expectations, policies, and procedures, and we encourage you to review it thoroughly to help prepare for another rewarding season.

We look forward to making music, learning, performing, and growing together throughout the year!

Ryan MacKinnon
General Manager



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This OSYO Handbook is intended as a reference for information about orchestra membership, expectations and policies. Any new information will be distributed to musicians and family members throughout the season as needed. If you have any questions, please contact us at *office@osyo.ca*.

OUR MISSION

The **OSYO** is a diverse community welcoming children and youth to a progressive orchestral experience that **ignites, encourages and enriches** a life-long love of music.

OSYO Values

- Teamwork & Collaboration
- Excellence
- Fun
- Community connection
- Personal development
- Positive role-modelling

The OSYO is a non-profit and registered charitable organization (# 119043727RR3331)

Membership

Membership in the OSYO is available to qualified musicians who audition and are accepted. Acceptance is based on musical skill and proficiency as well as the needs of each ensemble.

Membership is a serious commitment that requires musicians to attend weekly rehearsals from September to May, to attend the musicians retreat and to participate in our performances. Consistent attendance is essential to the success of the ensemble; musicians who miss three or more rehearsals, or who are absent from a dress rehearsal, will not be eligible to participate in the corresponding performance (at the conductor's discretion).

The OSYO 2026/2027 rehearsal and performance schedule can be found on the website.

Ensembles

- *Symphony*: The OSYO Symphony Orchestra is our most senior ensemble, bringing together advanced musicians across strings, woodwinds, brass, and percussion for a challenging and comprehensive orchestral experience.
- *Concert Orchestra*: The OSYO Concert Orchestra is a full orchestra for developing musicians, providing a supportive environment to strengthen ensemble skills and musical confidence across strings, woodwinds, brass, and percussion.
- *Philharmonia*: A string orchestra open to elementary and high school musicians where musicians should be at minimum Suzuki book 4 or RCM Grade 5/6 playing level, or higher.
- *Sinfonia*: An introductory string ensemble for musicians at Suzuki Book 2-4 or RCM Grade 2-4 playing level.

Registration

Registration for the season is on-line, with details on our website.

Auditions

All details can be found at www.osyo.ca/join

While auditions can be stressful, they are also a fact of life in musical performance. The OSYO aims to make the experience as positive and stress-free as possible.

Auditions for OSYO ensembles are held in early September. However, informal auditions may be held throughout the year to fill vacant positions. For more information, please contact us at office@osyo.ca.

Our season runs from September to May.

Audition Requirements are listed by Ensemble on our website.

Fees

OSYO Registration fees cover:

- Instruction by conductor and coaches; accompanist and guest performers.
- Rental and security fees for rehearsal and performance spaces.
- Music purchases.

Fee Schedule

The total OSYO Registration fee is as follows:

- Sinfonia: \$750
- Philharmonia: \$890
- Youth Band: \$750
- Symphony: \$890

This includes:

- Musician registration for the season.
- Musicians retreat day.
- 2 tickets per musician for our November and February concerts. (musicians don't require a ticket, and additional tickets will be available at the Box Office).
- OSYO folder (provided to new members).

There are a number of families who have multiple musicians in the OSYO. \$50 will be deducted from the registration fee for each successive musician from the same family.

All fees are due by the second week of rehearsals. We will only be accepting registration payment by email money transfer.

- Fees can be paid by email transfer to: ***payments@osyo.ca***.
- Please wait for the invoice to be sent.
- Make sure to enter your musician's name and Invoice Number in the comment line.
- If your bank requires a password, please use OSYO@2021.

For those who require financial assistance, the OSYO has a bursary program. To apply for a partial bursary, please refer to the details and application form on our website. For any queries, please email *office@osyo.ca*

Refunds

Unfortunately, we cannot issue refunds if a musician chooses to withdraw any time after the second rehearsal.

Policies and Expectations

OSYO Code of Conduct

The Code of Conduct applies to members of the OSYO community, including musicians, parents, staff (Conductors, Coaches and Administrative Personnel), and volunteers while attending or participating in OSYO activities and events. OSYO activities include but are not limited to weekly rehearsals, concerts, transport to and from an OSYO activity, breaks, retreat, tours, workshops, meetings, or any other activity relevant to or requisite to OSYO musical or educational events.

Core Statements

OSYO is committed to being a safe and respectful organization and providing a community that is free of harassment, discrimination, bullying and violence. Harassment can take many forms. This includes unwanted attention, inappropriate jokes or texts, threats, and other unwelcome verbal, written, visual, online or physical communication or conduct. Such actions serve no legitimate educational or developmental purpose and OSYO has strict intolerance towards such actions. Everyone has a responsibility to build safe and respectful culture.

The OSYO community shall

- respect the dignity of themselves and others, and act with consideration and good judgment in all inter-personal relationships.
- behave in a manner that is consistent with OSYO's policies as detailed in the Handbook.
- musicians shall respect their conductor's instructions regarding attendance at rehearsals, and with particular reference to the dress-rehearsal on the Tuesday (or designated day) before the concert. Continued absence from rehearsals could result in the musician being disbarred from performing at that concert.
- recognize that their words and actions are an example to other members of OSYO and to the public and behave in a manner appropriate to the expectations and standards of the event.
- exercise appropriate physical contact with each other and those they come into contact within the course of an OSYO activity.
- not use OSYO, or any OSYO event, to promote beliefs, behaviors, or practices that are not compatible with the aims of OSYO.
- recognise that physical or verbal abuse or any other form of abuse is totally unacceptable, and will not be tolerated.
- exercise respect for the property of others, including materials loaned to them by OSYO.
- not bring or consume drugs during any OSYO activity (rehearsals, concerts, and other events). This includes attending any OSYO activity under the influence of drugs. At activities within the music community that permit alcohol consumption, OSYO staff and volunteers on duty should exercise good judgement for alcohol consumption whilst responsible for students, or in the presence of students, and consider the impact of alcohol on the effectiveness of their performance of duties.
- OSYO encourages its musicians to bring concerns on an individual level to the General Manager, with a respectable demeanor, and with the explicit goal of resolving the issue. Any conflict amongst members of the OSYO community that remains unresolved by the General Manager will be directed to the OSYO Board Governance committee.

OSYO Disciplinary Process

1. Guiding Principles

OSYO is committed to providing a safe, respectful, and inclusive learning environment. Disciplinary processes are intended to be:

- Clear and consistent
- Proportionate and educational where possible
- Transparent to students and families
- Respectful of all individuals involved

2. Reporting and Documentation of Incidents

- Incidents may be reported by students, parents/guardians, staff, coaches, conductors, or volunteers.
- Reports should be made to the General Manager (GM) as soon as reasonably possible.
- Minor issues may be addressed immediately by staff or conductors without escalation, when appropriate.
- The GM documents the incident, including:
 - Date, time, and location
 - Individuals involved
 - Nature of the alleged breach of the Code of Conduct
 - Immediate actions taken (if any)

3. Initial Review and Resolution (Step One)

Responsibility of General Manager, in consultation with relevant conductors/coaches:

- The GM gathers written statements from student(s) involved, witnesses, staff or coaches
- Statements are reviewed to determine whether the issue can be resolved at the staff level, or the matter requires escalation to the Governance Committee
- Possible outcomes at this stage:
 - No further action
 - Verbal or written warning
 - Restorative conversation or mediation
 - One-rehearsal suspension (e.g., for peripheral or minor involvement)
 - Parents/guardians are informed of outcomes that involve formal warnings or suspensions.

4. Escalation to Governance Committee (Step Two):

Responsibility of OSYO Board Governance Committee in consultation with relevant OSYO staff.

This process applies when:

- a clear breach of the Code of Conduct is identified
- an issue cannot be resolved at the staff level
- the matter involves serious, repeated, or patterned behaviour

Process:

- The GM forwards all documentation and written statements to the Governance Committee.
- The Committee reviews materials and may request clarification or additional information.
- Decisions are made on a case-by-case basis, guided by consistency and precedent.

Criteria for Assessing Responsibility:

- The severity and nature of the behaviour
- Whether the behaviour was intentional or repeated
- The student's prior conduct history
- The student's level of involvement (primary vs. peripheral)
- Impact on other students, staff, or the organization
- Age, maturity, and context

Following review by the Governance Committee, outcomes may include:

- Suspension (rehearsal, term-based or year-based)
- Permanent expulsion
- Other conditions as deemed appropriate
- Tuition is non-refundable in cases of suspension or expulsion.

5. Communication with Families

Responsibility: General Manager, in consultation with the Governance Committee when applicable.

- Families are notified:
 - When a matter is formally escalated
 - When a disciplinary decision is made
- Communication is provided in writing and includes:
 - A summary of the decision
 - Duration and conditions of suspension (if applicable)
 - Any expectations for reinstatement or future participation

6. Governance & Approval

Decisions rendered by the Governance Committee constitute OSYO's final determination, subject to the Board's ongoing oversight to ensure alignment with organizational policies and governance standards. This policy shall be reviewed every 3 years to maintain relevance and effectiveness. Formal approval and reaffirmation of this policy were granted by the Board at its February 2026 meeting.

Consent

During the registration process, Parents have provided the following permissions:

Consent to the musician's photo/image/video being displayed publicly and online by the OSYO (if musician is identified, it will be by first name only).

In the event of an accident or other event, authorization for the OSYO to secure such medical services as may be deemed necessary. Agreement to hold harmless the OSYO staff and volunteers. It is understood that every effort will be made to contact the Parent if medical attention is sought.

Rehearsals

What to Bring

- Your instrument and accessories (bow, cello strap, mute etc.)
- Music and music folder.
- Music stand.
- Pencil.
- A week of diligent practice.
- A great attitude.

Rehearsal Times and Room Numbers

Please arrive at least 15 minutes prior to the rehearsal start time, to unpack and warm up.

- Sinfonia: 6pm–7pm, Room 129/131 (east end of the school).
- Philharmonia: 7:15pm–9pm, Room 129/131 (east end of the school).
- Concert Orchestra 6pm–7pm, Music Conservatory (west end of the school).
- Symphony 7:15pm–9:30pm, Music Conservatory (west end of the school).

Musicians are responsible for their own instruments before, during and after rehearsals and concerts. When not in use, instruments need to be set in such a way that they cannot be bumped, knocked over, or stepped on. The OSYO is not liable for damage to any musical instruments.

Music

Music for each term will be posted on the website. It is the musician's responsibility to download, and print all the music for their instrument and placement – there will not be extra music available from the librarian or conductor at rehearsals.

Music can be accessed within the member section of the website, after the musician has been accepted following their audition.

Communication

Weekly emails are sent to all musicians and parents to keep them updated on OSYO activities. Please be sure to read the emails, as that is our primary method of communication. Advise office@osyo.ca if you would like an email address added or deleted from this list, and please check your spam settings in order to ensure you receive all communications.

We are also active on social media. Please like, follow and share:

https://www.instagram.com/osyo_music/

<https://twitter.com/OSYOMusic>

<https://www.facebook.com/osyomusic>

Inclement Weather

As we move through the winter season, there is the possibility that a rehearsal may have to be cancelled due to inclement weather. The decision to cancel a rehearsal will be made by 3pm on the Tuesday (or other additional rehearsal days) and communicated on all our social feeds.

Attendance

Rehearsals are a vitally important part of the OSYO. If a musician misses a rehearsal, it impacts the entire orchestra, so musicians are required to attend every rehearsal. If a musician is sick or needs to miss a rehearsal for an important reason, please let know at office@osyo.ca as early as possible.

Please note that musicians who miss three or more rehearsals, or who are absent from a dress rehearsal, will not be eligible to participate in the corresponding performance (at the conductor's discretion).

Volunteer Opportunities

The OSYO relies on the help of our musician families. Throughout the season we ask for volunteers to help with specific activities pertaining to our Rehearsals, Concerts, Retreats, Bingo Sessions, and other activities. There are also longer-term volunteer needs, which go on throughout the year. Please consider how you can help, and an online sign-up form will be circulated at the beginning of the season.

You can also contact our General Manager at office@osyo.ca if you are interested.

Annual General Meeting

The OSYO's Annual General Meeting will be held either in person and/or via Zoom. The date for this meeting will be announced well in advance, and details communicated. At least one parent from each family is asked to attend. We will be presenting our financial situation and budget, as well as confirming our Board of Directors.

Tours

The OSYO endeavors to provide musicians with a range of enriching musical experiences, including touring opportunities. These travelling musical experiences may be within Canada or abroad. Travel costs for these experiences are separate from fees and communicated well in advance of a potential tour.

Community

Throughout the season, OSYO looks for opportunities to participate in community events. This may include small chamber groups performing at local events, senior homes or the hospital. We encourage musicians to take part in these events that allow us to share our love of music and contribute to the broader community. If you are aware of an event that we could participate in, please let us know at office@osyo.ca.



We trust this handbook has given you a good overview of the OSYO and your part in it. Should you have any additional questions, please don't hesitate to contact us at [**office@osyo.ca**](mailto:office@osyo.ca).

Keep any eye open for our weekly updates. Looking forward to a great season!

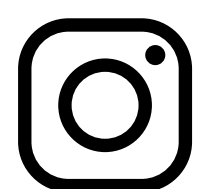
CONTACT INFORMATION

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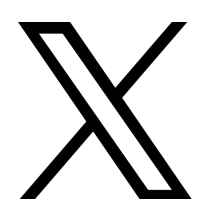
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