



## **Northern Valley Youth Orchestras: SEATING POLICY**

Students accepted into the NVYO program are assigned to one of three orchestras, based on the instrumentation needs of the orchestras and the demonstrated ability of the auditioning students. Members are then assigned places within the orchestra.

**The purpose of assigned orchestral seating is to create a balanced ensemble.** In an educational setting, it is vital to offer different students leadership opportunities and also to ensure that students learn all the possible roles their instruments can play in an orchestral setting. Students' abilities also change throughout the season. Rarely, if ever, is it useful to rank students numerically and seat them accordingly. With this in mind, below is an overview of NVYO's seating concepts, to help both parents and students understand all the levels of thought that go into creating an orchestra. **All seating is ultimately at the conductors' discretion.**

**1. Wind, brass and percussion** players rotate parts as much as possible.

**2. String seating** is also rotated, giving students the opportunity to develop skill performing both close to and away from the conductor as well as both inside and outside on the stand. Seating may even be switched around weekly at first, as the conductors decide what stand combinations work best for the orchestra sections.

Violin students are rotated between sections as much as is possible, to develop reading and ear training skills in all ranges of their instrument and to establish that violin sections are equally significant to the music.

Within the section, players with different strengths are paired together to enhance leadership, promote balance, and challenge current skills; effort may also be made to give smaller students unobstructed views.

**3. Principals/section leaders** are selected based on attendance, attentiveness, demonstrated ability to lead, and progress, in addition to the auditions heard at the beginning of the session. Returning students' history of practice habits, attention, and commitment is taken into consideration.

**4. Concert seating is announced no later than two weeks prior to each concert.**

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In case you are curious about what happens in professional orchestras:

"Nowadays, in the interest of equity and morale, many professional orchestras use rotating seating plans for the string sections, with only the first two or three positions in each section fixed." ~ *from kennedy-center.org "NPR Classical Music Companion"*