

# Coronado High School Guitar Program

## Expectations and Policies for Beginning Guitar

Dr. Nishimoto      nishimc@nv.ccsd.net      dr-nishimoto.com

### Materials Needed

Every student needs a 3-ring binder (1" is suggested) and 5 dividers for this class. The dividers should be labeled in the following EXACT order: 1) Book, 2) Handouts, 3) Vocabulary, 4) Notes & Graded Work, and 5) Handbook. This is referred to as your Guitar Binder. You are required to have your Guitar Binder every day in class as well as a pen/pencil and your own picks. Guitar Binders are not left in the classroom and should be brought home every day to practice. Binders are to be kept clean, neat, and most importantly, organized. Dividers must be actual binder dividers and not notebook or construction paper. They will be checked on a periodic basis for a grade. The more organized and complete a student's binder is, the better they will do on "open binder" quizzes and online quizzes.

### Grading Policies

Quarter grading in guitar classes are on the following basis (these weights vary from quarter-to-quarter):

- Participation (-25%)
- Classwork / Homework (-25%)
- Written Tests / Online Quizzes (-25%)
- Performance Tests (-25%)

#### Participation

Five points per day are earned for on-task and appropriate behavior. Five points are deducted for each incidence of: non-participation issues (off-task behavior, tardy, absence, extended break from classroom); general misbehavior (excessive talking, inappropriate language or conversations, etc.); disregarding classroom policies (non-preparation, lining up at the door, electronic devices, leaving a mess). An entire week of participation points (usually 25, depending on the week) is deducted for each incidence of a Level Four infraction or audience etiquette infraction. In the event that participation is lost due to an absence, a makeup credit (non-penalized; you will receive full credit) must be completed (see website). Participation lost due to misbehavior may only be recovered by completion of a Contribution Project.

#### Classroom Assignments, Homework, Tests, and Quizzes

Classroom assignments and homework are to be completed by the student by the deadline given. This category includes notebook checks, vocabulary, worksheets, etc. Written tests and online quizzes will cover material from class and/or in the text. Performance tests will be performed on the guitar, in class (classmates will be the audience). Rubrics will be provided as well as individual feedback.

#### Makeup Assignments/Tests & Late Work

Assignments receive a 25% grade reduction on the first day late. On the second day after the due date the assignment will receive a 50% grade reduction. Most assignments, tests, and quizzes will still be accepted within the quarter for a 50% reduction. Students who are absent on the day of a major quiz or test are expected to be prepared to take the test or quiz immediately upon return from the absence (during class). It is the *student's responsibility* to schedule a makeup within 3 days of the return from absence, after which it is considered late.

#### Overall Grading Period Breakdown

Semester exams will be 20% of the overall semester grade with each component quarter grade being 40% each. Quarter grades are not rounded, only semester grades within a half percent (i.e. 79.6% semester grade will be recorded as a B). Grades of D or F will not be rounded up (i.e. a semester grade of 59.9 is still an F).

*The teacher reserves the right to add extra assignments, grading categories, or restructure emphasis as seen fit in accordance with the CCSD Guitar Curriculum and in the best interest of student achievement.*

## Standards of Behavior

Performing Arts is an etiquette sensitive discipline. Above and beyond class rules, students are expected to demonstrate proper audience etiquette. For Beginning level students this includes proper listening and applause etiquette during classroom playing tests and performances.

Video, audio, or still-photography is prohibited inside the classroom especially during instruction time without expressed direct permission from Dr. Nishimoto. Despite the classroom being a public space, video recording of events in the classroom limits the participation of the recorder and disrupts the learning environment. This includes videorecording of other students (even with permission) and the teacher during instruction. If photos or recordings are posted to social media or other internet resources for the intent of causing harm (embarrassment, harassment, etc.) or are posted without the permission of those depicted, the student responsible will be reported.

## Guitar Class Daily Procedures

### Entering Class

Classroom expectations are in effect as soon as students enter the door, even during passing time. At their seats students must have class materials (guitar, guitar binder, pick) ready. Backpacks are to be stowed under the chair.

### Passes

To request restroom privileges, students must raise their hand and request to use the restroom (not in the middle of instruction). Again, this must be during a break in instruction. Since our classroom is directly off the central quad, for safety reasons, no passes will be given when class is concurrent with another lunch period (part of 5<sup>th</sup> period).

### Closing Activities & Independent Practice Time

At the end of class, the usual closing activity is “independent practice time”. Students are to use this time to practice and reinforce the techniques and repertoire presented in class. Misuse of this time could result in loss of instrument privileges, loss of participation points (see Grading Policies), and/or disciplinary action (see Progressive Discipline Plan). Misuse of independent practice time includes excessive off-task noisemaking, distracting of other students, packing up early, excessive talking, and/or getting out of your assigned seat without permission.

### Exiting Class

In the last two to three minutes of class students should return their guitar to its case and return the case to the storage rack. Before exiting class, each student is to check and be sure their area is clean of trash. Students will lose participation points for the day for “lining up” at the door (this also includes moving to a seat closer to the door that is not your assigned seat) or for leaving trash in their seat area.

## Classroom/Program Disciplinary Policies

The CHS Guitar Progressive Discipline adheres to Coronado’s school-wide policy.

### School-Wide Progressive Discipline Policy

1<sup>st</sup> Violation = Warning

2<sup>nd</sup> Violation = Parent Contact

3<sup>rd</sup> Violation = Teacher Intervention (Social Worker/Counselor Referral, etc.)

Future Violations = Referral to Discipline Office

### School-Wide Tardy Policy

1<sup>st</sup> Tardy = Warning

2<sup>nd</sup> Tardy = Warning

3<sup>rd</sup> Tardy = Teacher Contact Home

4<sup>th</sup> Tardy = Deans’ Phone Call Home

5<sup>th</sup> Tardy = Deans’ Detention

6<sup>th</sup> Tardy = Deans’ Conference RPC

### CHS Guitar Progressive Discipline Plan:

1. Strike One: Student may be given a verbal reminder of the expectation and forfeiture of five participation points
2. Strike Two: Forfeiture of another five participation points, teacher-parent contact
3. Strike Three: Student-Teacher Conference, referral and forfeiture of another five participation points (15 total)

4. Level Four: Guitar Suspension and Dean's Referral, and/or possible removal from course, forfeiture of participation points for entire week from the date of this infraction.
  - a. At this point, the student is required to complete a "Contribution Project" to be permitted back to class activities; otherwise alternative activities must be completed by this student (written work)

Steps may be skipped in the progressive plan if a student is a constant or consistent behavior problem (i.e. a student who has been given a warning two days in a row may on the third day receive an immediate student conference on their first offense of that day) or if the magnitude of the offense warrants severe response. Should a student disrupt the class to the extent that other students' abilities to learn are affected, or the student creates a hostile environment, the student will be immediately asked to leave the classroom and complete a contribution project proposal.

Exact consequences are listed below:

#### Contribution Project

This project involves a proposal of contribution or service to the classroom, school, or community and completion of the proposed project by the student. At Level Four of the Progressive Discipline Plan, students are required to complete a Contribution Project proposal before being readmitted to class. Refusal to do so or to complete the proposed project constitutes insubordination and is another Level Four infraction. Contribution projects can not involve monetary contributions.

#### Guitar Suspension

Guitar class is an elective, and playing on school guitars is a privilege. Those who misbehave to the point where they can no longer be trusted with instruments during class will be on "Guitar Suspension". For the duration of the suspension, students will continue the curriculum via daily paper worksheets that they will complete in isolation.

#### Serious Offenses

Serious offenses include fighting, discriminatory language, theft, substance use/possession, bullying, truancy, and insubordination. Students should also realize that items in the classroom were paid for by hardworking student fundraisers, generous donors/sponsors, or are the personal property of the teacher. Theft in any form will not be tolerated. If the theft was perpetrated against the program or teacher, a request will be made to press charges and remove the student from the program. Truant students, or students who have an unexcused absence to only one period ("ditching") will receive an immediate Dean's Referral for investigation. It is the truant student's responsibility to schedule a time for makeup work or tests.

### Instrument Policies

The instrument used in this class is a nylon string acoustic guitar. All students will be able to use a school-owned instrument during class; the parent and student will be personally responsible for any damage to an instrument while in the student's care. Each student will be assigned a guitar for the year. Each guitar is thoroughly photographed by the teacher at the time of assigning and all preexisting damage (including superficial flaws) is documented. Each guitar is checked several times per school year by the instructor for new damage. It is the student's responsibility to report damage as soon as it is discovered. This guitar is for classroom use only and ***may not be taken home by a student. It is required that students have a guitar for at-home practicing.*** The guitar that is suggested is a nylon six-string acoustic guitar. As classroom guitars are used by multiple classes, reporting damage as soon as it occurs is extremely important. If new significant damage is discovered by the instructor and no reports have been given, all students assigned to that instrument will be charged fines (see below).

#### Guitar Cases & Special Music Stands

Students are also responsible for the guitar case. Students are not to rest their foot on the case for any reason. Students are also responsible for their assigned music stand, which will change throughout the year as seats change. Again, students are not to rest their feet on the music stand for any reason (and may be fined a carelessness charge if they do).

#### Detuning Guitars

Detuning a guitar is prohibited. This refers to alternate D-tuning, G-tuning, etc., as well. This can also refer to randomly turning tuners as a joke. This causes unnecessary wear on the strings, affecting both the lifespan and intonation. Because the entire set of strings must be replaced when one string either breaks or loses its intonation, students caught detuning a guitar will be required to buy Coronado a new set of brand-specific nylon strings or pay the equivalent amount (\$10).

### Carelessness or Vandalism Charge

Parents and students should be aware that the replacement cost for the classroom guitars range from \$250 (Beginning-level) to \$700 (Advanced). Most of the damage to the school guitars is due to carelessness. Students who are consistently careless with their assigned instrument (taking the guitar out of the case incorrectly, handling the guitar or case in an inappropriate manner, carrying the guitar inappropriately, dropping the guitar, using the pick overly aggressively, etc.) will be charged 10% of the replacement cost of the instrument. In the event that new damage is found, even superficial, a carelessness charge will be applied. This carelessness charge also applies to cases and music stands. Students who willfully vandalize instruments will be charged 50% of the replacement cost of the instrument (and removed from the guitar program). If vandalism is extreme to where the guitar cannot be used in performance, full replacement cost will be charged/fined.

### Practicing and Private Lessons

Practice is the foundation for a good musician/guitarist. Practice reinforces techniques learned in class, solidifies repertoire, and makes for an overall better performance in the end. That being said, *practicing at home on a daily basis is a requirement of the class*. While it is not part of the student's grade, it will affect it. A student who does not practice or practices poorly may end up receiving poor grades on playing tests due to their unpreparedness. Students should be practicing exercises and repertoire from class, as well as practicing other music in which they are interested.

A scheduled time should be set up every day for the student to practice. The average time a **beginning** student should be practicing is *at least 15-30 minutes every single day*.

### Practice Area

Parents/guardians can and should aid in their child's practice by providing a quiet practice area away from distractions. It is very important that the practice area mimic a performance stage. Therefore, a proper chair and music stand are necessary. Although it may seem counterintuitive, the best places to set up practice areas are in a family area of the home that is away from the TV (not in a bedroom or in a closed-off area). The reasoning for this is two-fold. First, bedrooms are notoriously terrible places to practice as there is the temptation to sit on the bed (in an awful playing position). Second, in a family area, the student will be more aware of their performance since others can potentially overhear. This motivates the student to not only recognize mistakes but address them. This may seem disruptive to the rest of the household, but is a small price to pay for the development of a confident and skilled musician. Even minute details of a practice regiment have far-reaching results.

### Miscellaneous

Left-handed individuals are taught right-handed guitar. There are two reasons for this: first, all guitar materials are written for right handed guitarists; second, all instruments are inherently right handed (there is no such thing as a "lefty" violin, cello, saxophone, flute, etc.). Exceptions may be made on a case-by-case basis.

Fingernails are a focus of a successful guitarist. For all guitarists, trimmed left hand fingernails are necessary. Having long nails (or acrylics), hinder the proper fretting of the strings, cause muting of strings, and result in an overall poor sound. No leniency will be given on playing tests/quizzes due to poor sound caused by long left hand nails. On the other hand, properly shaped right hand fingernails are encouraged for any guitarist interested in getting the fullest tone from fingerstyle techniques.

### Student Placement

Students are placed in the appropriate level of Guitar (Beginning, Intermediate, and Advanced), based on experience and previous course success. Beginning Guitar is an open elective to any and all students regardless of experience. Intermediate Guitar is open to those students who passed both semesters of Beginning Guitar with a grade of B or better and citizenship of "S" or "O" OR auditioned students who can read standard music notation for guitar as well as perform the prerequisites (listed on website). Advanced Guitar is audition only and is reserved for those students who have previous guitar ensemble experience.

## Guitar Handbook Agreement

*This form and the class fee must be returned before a school guitar will be issued to a student.*

The class fee is \$40 and can be paid using the Coronado High School WebStore (linked on the school website, coronadocougars.net/school or on dr-nishimoto.com under the Forms menu). Please print the receipt and turn it in with this form. You may also return this form with the class fee in \$40 cash or check payable to Coronado High School, although the WebStore is the preferred method, since cash or checks are only accepted after school on certain dates.

Only one parent signature is necessary

Please Print Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Period: \_\_\_\_\_

Please Print Parent Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Parent E-mail(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Phone Number(s): \_\_\_\_\_

By signing below I agree to the following:

- I have read this handbook and understand the procedures and policies
- I agree to follow and support these procedures and policies
- I understand that school-owned instruments and equipment will be used in the classroom, and that the parent and student will be personally responsible for the cost to repair or replace any instrument or equipment that is damaged while being used/misused by the student. *This includes accidental damage.*

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

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

Please return only this page, not the entire document.

A Message from Principal Piccininni:

The teachers, administrators, and faculty of Coronado High School care deeply about each and every one of our students. We understand that at times the culmination of academics, athletics, and after school activities can be challenging or even overwhelming. It is our hope to ensure that both academic/social progress AND student mental health and well-being are top considerations in all we do at Coronado. Accordingly, if you have any concerns regarding your student's progress or emotional well being, please call our school at 702-799-6800 so we can work with your family to find resolution and create the optimal learning environment for both achievement and happiness. This is a goal we strive for every day.