



Parent/Student
Handbook
2024 - 2025

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Introduction:

Dear Parents and Students:

Welcome to the music programs of Oakland Homeschool Music, Inc. Oakland Homeschool Music's mission is to develop and provide music education programs through music history, music theory, and music performance. The concentration is on the music performance element with participation in large group ensembles, private lessons, and elementary music classes. Oakland Homeschool Music's program gives students an opportunity to develop a solid foundation for post-high school musical participation and education, and a lifelong enjoyment of the gift of music.

Although it is based in Oakland County, it is open to homeschoolers from the surrounding area for students in grades K - 12. We have students who come from seven counties in southeast Michigan. The program is also open to students who do not have a comparable music program in their schools. This handbook will cover the information that you will need to know to have a successful year. Please keep it in a memorable place so you will have access to it when you have questions. It is also available online at our website.

Mr. Merlyn Beard
Music Director, OHMI

Ensembles/Classes:

Bands:

Beginning Band – Beginning Band is for the students that are starting on wind, brass, and percussion instruments. There is no previous music experience required, but any music training will be helpful.

Intermediate Band – The Intermediate Band is for students with at least one year of experience playing wind, brass, or percussion instruments. Instrumental technique and group musicianship skills will be stressed in their music, while they learn as a performance ensemble. This is an intermediate level group. Audition or recommendation of the instructor is required if not moving up from Beginning Band.

Concert Band – The Concert Band is for students with at least two years of experience playing wind, brass, or percussion instruments. Instrumental technique and group musicianship skills are stressed in their music while they learn as a performance ensemble. Players may join the Philharmonic Orchestra for a special full symphony orchestra piece during the year. This is an intermediate level group. Audition or recommendation of the instructor is required.

Wind Symphony – is for the advanced wind/brass/percussion student. The Wind Symphony focuses on music literature for the symphony (string, wind, and percussion) ensemble and chamber ensembles. This group will be made up of brass, winds and percussion instruments. Audition or recommendation of the instructor is required.

Orchestras:

Beginning Orchestra – Beginning Orchestra is for the students that are starting on string instruments. There is no previous music experience required, but any music training will be helpful.

Intermediate Orchestra – The Intermediate Orchestra is for students with at least one year of experience playing string instruments. Instrumental technique and group musicianship skills will be stressed in their music, while they learn as a performance ensemble. This is an intermediate level group. Audition or recommendation of the instructor is required if not moving up from Beginning Orchestra.

Philharmonic Orchestra – The Philharmonic Orchestra is for students with at least two years of experience playing string instruments. Instrumental technique and group musicianship skills will be stressed in their music, while they learn as a performance ensemble. Players may join the Concert Band for a special full symphony orchestra piece during the year. This is an intermediate level group. Audition or recommendation of the instructor is required.

Symphony Orchestra – is for the advanced string student. The Symphony Orchestra focuses on music literature for the string symphony ensemble, full orchestra and chamber ensembles. This group will be made up of string instruments, and combine with Wind Symphony for full orchestra. Audition or recommendation of the instructor is required.

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Chamber Ensemble - is by invitation only, and is an advanced mixed chamber ensemble. Students in Chamber Ensemble must also be concurrently enrolled in either Symphony Orchestra or Wind Symphony. Audition required.

Vocal Music:

Elementary Chorus – EC is for 3rd through 5th grade students. The students will be learning the fundamentals of music through singing. Students in this class are expected to have basic print reading skills.

Middle School Chorus – is for the middle school student. The Chorus will sing many different styles of choral music throughout the year, as well as learning beginning sight-singing and music theory. There is no previous music experience required, but any music training will be helpful.

Concert Choir – is an intermediate level group. Concert Choir will do four-part (SATB) music, and will sing many different styles of choral music throughout the year, as well as beginning - intermediate sight-singing and music theory. There is no previous music experience required, but any music training will be helpful.

Musica Celestiale (Advanced Choir) – is the advanced level choir for high school students with more difficult repertoire, and theory and sight-singing. Students will also sing with the Concert Choir. A minimum of one year of experience is expected. Yearly auditions are required, which include a solo of a classical nature and sight-singing demonstration.

Guitar:

Beginning Guitar Class – is a beginning level class for those wanting to learn classical/folk guitar. Students will learn technique and guitar literature.

Intermediate Guitar Class - is for students with at least one year of experience playing the guitar. This is an intermediate level group. Audition or recommendation of the instructor is required if not moving up from Beginning Guitar.

Advanced Guitar Class - is for the advanced guitar student with 3+ years of playing experience. Audition or recommendation of the instructor is required.

Elementary Classes:

Elementary Music Class – EMC is for the Kindergarten through 2nd grade students. The students will be learning the fundamentals of music through singing, instruments and movement. Students in this class are not required to be able to read.

Young Strings Class – is for students ages 4 – 8 who wish to start violin/viola/cello instruction. This is a Suzuki – style class where parents participates with the student. The student/parents will receive a 15 minute private lesson along with a group ensemble time each week.

Other Classes:

Private Lessons - are available for students who wish to have one-on-one instruction for their instrument, voice, or wish to take piano lessons.

Summer Musical Theatre Class - is a 6 week summer program focusing on musical theatre for students in 6 - 12th grade. Students can perform on stage, play in the pit orchestra, or work the technical aspects behind stage.

Class Rehearsal Locations:

Locations:

- Waterford Campus – Grace Chapel 2515 North Williams Lake Rd. Waterford, MI 48327.
- East Campus – First Baptist Church of Sterling Heights 33380 Ryan Rd. Sterling Heights 48310

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Calendar:

The OHMI Calendar for this school year is on the home page of your Parent Portal in Praxi. All dates are current as of August 30, 2024. If there are any changes, you will be notified by email and the calendar will be updated as soon as the date/change is approved. Please check the calendar frequently.

Rehearsal Schedule: OHMI will rehearse in Waterford on Monday afternoons September 9, 2024 to May 19, 2025. The East Campus will rehearse on Tuesday afternoons September 10, 2024 to May 20, 2025. We will have time off around Christmas, as well as a Spring Break.

Concerts: There are three concerts planned for each year for the Festival groups – **attendance is mandatory**. Upper Level groups will have a minimum of 2 concerts. Beginning level groups will have 2 Showcase Concerts in December and May – **attendance is mandatory**.

Rehearsal Attendance:

Every member of the group is important. Band, choir, and orchestra are team efforts and require consistent teamwork. We rehearse once a week, so we only have between 9 and 14 rehearsals for each concert. **The importance of attendance cannot be stressed enough. Attendance will be taken at every rehearsal and concert.** Band/Orchestra/Choir depends on everyone being there to learn & sing/play their part for the rest of their ensemble.

We understand that students may get sick, or a family emergency may arise. Please contact us as soon as you can in these situations. *If a student misses too many rehearsals or two of the last three rehearsals before a concert, the student may be asked not to play/sing in that concert. The final decision is up to the ensemble director.* There will be **no** refund of tuition in this event. If your child is ill with a fever, vomiting, productive cough, diarrhea, pink eye, or anything else contagious, please keep them home. If they are recovering & not contagious, even if they have little or no voice for choir, please send them to class. They can listen and follow along with the music and participate in class, and not sing to save their voice. Again, please be sure they are not contagious and will not spread any illness. Make sure you notify the director if they have been ill.

What to bring to every rehearsal: Band/Orchestra/Choir folder, music, pencil, and for choir – water bottle and theory notebook.

Concerts/Performances:

Concerts are the culmination of our learning process in an ensemble. Concert performances are the demonstration of the work in class, and since this work is done as a group, **attendance at concerts is required** and part of the basis for skill evaluation. Each ensemble has 2 (elementary) or 3 (upper level) concerts during the 2024-2025 season. When one person is missing, then our team and our sound will be incomplete. If there is a conflict, we must be notified as soon as possible in writing and at least two weeks before the concert for an excused absence. (Not all absences may be fully excused). In unexpected emergencies, please contact us as soon as you know. See “contacting us” section.

Feel free to invite your families to attend – it will make it all the more special for your student. The December, March, and May concerts are planned with receptions following. The students will attend at scheduled rehearsal time at the concert location for a dress rehearsal, have a break, followed by the concert at 7 pm. It is important for the students to have a chance to warm-up in the rehearsal space because we do not rehearse there, and the acoustics are different. The students will hear the music differently. Parents are asked to bring 2 dozen cookies, or a veggie tray, fruit tray, cake, brownies, quick breads, crackers & cheese, etc. to the reception. OHMI will provide paper products and beverages.

Concert Dress:

Details for the individual ensembles follow:

Elementary Music Class/Young Strings: should wear a nice outfit they have. Boys should wear long pants and a collared shirt – ties are optional. Girls should wear a skirt & blouse or a dress.

Beginning Band, Beginning Orchestra, Beginning Guitar, Elementary Chorus, Intermediate Band, Intermediate Orchestra, Intermediate Guitar Concert Band, Philharmonic Orchestra, Middle School Chorus, and Advanced Guitar Class: should wear the OHMI shirt/blouse with black pants with black socks and shoes or black skirts (knee length or longer) with black hose and black shoes.

Concert Choir, Advanced Choir, Wind Symphony, and Symphony Orchestra: Ladies will wear their Concert Dresses, and gentlemen the tuxes. These will be provided by OHMI, and the students will be required to maintain them and return them in good condition at the end of the year. Parents will pay a \$30 rental/cleaning fee per year. If damaged,

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the student/parents are responsible for the replacement cost of the outfit. If you are in 2 ensembles requiring concert attire (ex: Concert Choir & Symphony), the cost is \$40/year.

Contacting us:

Webpage: Our web address is www.ohmimusic.com.

Please check here for updated information throughout the year.

Email Address: info@ohmimusic.com

For billing/accounts: bookkeeper@ohmimusic.com

Enrollment/class changes: info@ohmimusic.com

Phone: (248) 760-7864

Address: P.O. Box 1833, Clarkston, MI 48347

Tuition:

Tuition: Oakland Homeschool Music is a tuition-based program. The tuition covers the rehearsal space rental fees, the purchasing of music, large costly instruments, business and office supplies, concert programs, directory & handbook printing, and the hiring of ensemble conductor/directors. While our costs do not change with each additional family member, we want to assist the families with more than one student involved, so there is a multiple student discount. Families that come into a hardship situation need to speak with us to make arrangements. We have a designated tuition assistance fund, and limited monies are available. Please call or write to request a tuition assistance form, or download it from your Parent Portal. Tuition bills can be paid directly online through the Parent Portal in Praxi or by check/cash in person or mailed to the P.O. Box.

For all questions concerning your tuition questions, please contact the bookkeeper – at bookkeeper@ohmimusic.com.

All tuition payments should sent to:

Oakland Homeschool Music, Inc

P.O. Box 1833

Clarkston, MI 48347

After the Family Registration fee & Student Security Deposit is paid, you will be billed in 8 monthly payments from September to April. **You are always welcome to pay off your bill early.** Late fees will be added if payments are not made on time, unless you have contacted the Treasurer to make alternative arrangements. You will receive a monthly statement until your bill is paid in full. You can also check your current balance at any time on the home page of your Parent Portal, and can make payments from there. If at any time you are having financial difficulty, or need to make alternate payment arrangements, please let us know. We will work with you to make a payment plan that fits your family.

If payments are behind & no arrangements have been made, students may not be allowed to attend class/concerts/ attend OHMI sponsored activities (Solo & Ensemble, Honors Orchestra, etc.) grades/transcripts/formal documentation will not be given, and if there is a balance at the end of the year, they will not be allowed to re-enroll until they are current. Anyone with a poor payment history will be required to pay in full before enrolling.

Drop/Adds:

All class drops or adds after registration is complete must be done through the Program Administrator, who is in charge of registration. You can get a copy of the form from the Site manager at your campus, or in your Parent Portal in Praxi under Resources, fill it out, and turn it in to the Site Manager. Forms may also be scanned and emailed to the Program Administrator. Drop/Adds are NOT official until the paperwork received and processed by the Program Administrator.

Refunds:

Tuition refunds will only be given within the first two weeks of classes. You will be refunded the total amount paid minus a \$20/student sheet music fee because music is purchased before the start of the semester, and cannot returned or refunded.

Praxi:

Praxi school is our online administration system for students and families to see grades, attendance, update contact information, contact teachers, submit practice records, etc. The Site Manager can help you access your account if you are having trouble.

Parent volunteers:

As OHMI has grown, the Board identified the need to have volunteer participation from our families. The amount of “behind the scenes” work that goes on to keep OHMI running and develop OHMI into a quality educational program is tremendous. The amount of time put in at home on non-music/educational related tasks by the directors is considerable. To help our directors out, the Board asks all families participating in OHMI to volunteer some time to assure that OHMI runs smoothly. There are many different areas with many different time commitments – pick one that best fits your family’s schedule. The OPUS director will contact you to discuss a position that fits your schedule and helps the organization. They will be available the first few weeks of class, so stop by and introduce yourself.

All volunteers will report to the OPUS director who will be coordinating our volunteers. For families who do not participate, there is an additional tuition charge. This is not to discourage you from being part of OHMI, but to encourage you to volunteer! We want your help more than your money. If everyone pitches in a small amount of time, everyone benefits. Please contact the chairperson of OPUS (**OHMI Parents United to Serve**) from your campus if you have any questions. OPUS directors communicate with parents via phone & email. Volunteer help helps OHMI keep the tuition costs down for our families.

Behavior Expectations:

It is expected that students will be cooperative, polite, and ready to learn while they are in class. They will have time before and after class to socialize with their friends. Musical ensembles are a lot of fun and very rewarding, but if there are constant interruptions nothing will get accomplished in class. Class expectations will be reviewed with the students at the beginning of the term and reiterated as needed. Students show they are ready to learn by participating, listening, following directions, playing/singing, and cooperatively working with their director, section leader, and other ensemble members.

If it is necessary to speak with a student, they will be given one verbal warning. If they continue to be disruptive they will be asked to sit out the rest of the class and their parents will be notified. Additional measures will be taken if needed, in consultation with the parents.

OHMI is a K-12 program, and it is expected that behavior and language by students, parents, and staff will reflect that. Younger siblings and students are always in the building, so actions and language should be “G” rated. Public displays of affection by students who are dating should be reserved for your own time, outside of the program.

Cellphones - can be carried by the students, but must be silenced (or shut off) and put away for the duration of class. If a student uses the phone during class for texting or any other reason, they will be given one warning, and then the phone will be taken away by the teacher, and a parent will need to retrieve the phone. If it is a persistent problem, the student will be asked to leave the phone at home.

Remember that we need to show our best behavior while we are in the rehearsal and concert facilities as we are guests in someone else’s building. The behavior expectations/guidelines are specified on the liability/student expectations form. Every family is required to read, understand, and sign the form to enroll in our program. OHMI reserves the right to withdraw from the program any student who does not follow the guidelines.

Grading:

All students with the exception of EMC and Young Strings are given a formal grade for the year. The grade will be determined by the student’s participation, practice record, effort, and any formal or informal evaluation the director gives. See your student’s teacher for details. EMC students and Young Strings will receive an Assessment Evaluation.

HS students may choose to ask for Fine Arts credit in addition to a grade. Students are given 1.0 credit per music class that they complete per year. Students joining midway through the year may receive partial credit if ½ year is completed. All requirements set by the instructor must be completed in order to receive credit.

Supplies:

Instrumental Ensembles: Students should have their instrument, music, **PENCIL** (**PENS ARE NOT ALLOWED**), and needed accessories with them for every class time. The music assigned to the student is the property of Oakland Homeschool Music, Inc. and is his/her responsibility to take care of and return it in good condition for the next time the music is used. Missing or damaged music must be paid for by the family along with the shipping costs from the publisher or vendor.

Accessories for the student’s instrument such as *rosin*, *endpin rests* (for cellos and basses), *shoulder rests* (violins and violas), cleaning supplies, *cork grease* (clarinets and saxophones), *valve oil* (brass) and other items may be required for proper playing technique and performance. Purchase and the replacement of these accessories and strings are the student’s responsibility. Most local music stores will be able to provide you with the items you will need. Attached is a list of local music stores.

Choral Ensembles: Choir folders and music are the property of Oakland Homeschool Music, Inc. It must be treated respectfully and returned in good condition. Your child will be assigned a numbered folder and its corresponding music. Any marking of the music must be done in **PENCIL** so it can be erased if needed. If the music and or the folder is lost or damaged, the student's family will be billed for replacement cost plus shipping from the publisher. Please remind your child to take good care of their music. Drawing pictures and writing comments on the music other than making notes related to the music are **NOT acceptable**. **Each choral student will use a music theory textbook or notebook**. Many choral programs are remiss in not providing instruction in music theory and sight-reading. It may be review for students who have studied piano or another instrument before, but review of knowledge is always a good thing. The textbook (if required) is included in your tuition and is yours to keep.

Elementary Music Class and Elementary Chorus: have a supply list that you will get from the teacher. Please have your child bring those items to class each week.

Fundraising:

Any fundraising we do is optional, not required. We try to find ways to raise money without having a cost factor for our families. One way is through the Scrip program - a handout will be provided. We also collect Boxtops for Education, so please download the app, choose OHMI as the recipient, and scan in your receipts. No more clipping and collecting boxtops - it's easy! Another way you can help keep tuition costs down is by signing up for Kroger Community Rewards - www.krogercommunityrewards.com. If you shop at Kroger, and sign up for the program, OHMI gets a donation from Kroger based on the money you spend there. We are an IRS 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization, which allows all donations to be tax-deductible. There is a sheet that details these programs on the information table, or ask the Site Manager for one.

Inclement Weather:

In case of inclement weather, please check the website and check your email by 10am to see if we are having classes for the day. Sometimes school districts will close due to snow in the morning, but by the time OHMI holds classes the roads are cleared and passable. If you ever have a question on whether we are holding classes, you can email or call us. If we do cancel, we will send out an email that morning. Praxi also has the capability to send out a text blast to all families. If you want to be notified by text, be sure to mark that when you register in Praxi, or ask the Site Manager to add you.

Varsity Music Letters/Senior Banquet:

Are available to high school students who complete the activities need to achieve point levels. There is a worksheet each student fills out to document activities for the year towards the required point levels. This needs to be handed in by April 1st of each year. Varsity letters & music awards will be given out at the Senior/Varsity banquet in May. Varsity jackets are available, optional, and ordered by the parents. There is a Varsity jacket guideline sheet that outlines the expected style, colors, etc. Students need to submit their form the freshman year, not wait until the Senior year and submit all 4 years of forms. This puts an undue burden on the office staff to verify 4 years of activities. If the student starts OHMI after their freshman year, they should submit it the first year they attend. The Senior/Varsity Banquet is in May when we recognize our Seniors and award recipients.

Home Practice:

Practicing at home is the key for success in band, choir, and orchestra. Home practice reinforces skills being learned in class. The best way to practice is to develop a consistent schedule with a short practice time every day. The discipline of daily practice generates results much faster than long practice times on scattered days. Parents can demonstrate interest in their child's music progress by having them play/sing for them, providing opportunities to play/sing for family and friends are setting up a positive and encouraging environment for their student's home practice. The students are expected to practice at home and will be asked to document their work for their director. The ensemble director will set the final requirement of practice time expected. The general goal of 20 - 60 minutes a day, five (5) days a week would be the minimum practice time needed to see consistent musical growth and improvement for instrumentalists, and 20 - 30 minutes/day for vocalists. Practice Records will be provided for the students to keep track of the time and the music that they are practicing.

General items to remember:

Each branch may have students who have severe food allergies. We will let everyone in the branch know if that is the case. When choosing items for the concert receptions, also keep that in mind. We do not want anyone to have a reaction if we can avoid it. Please let the office staff know if your child has a severe allergy so we are aware.

Along those same lines, if you wish to bring in treats for the class for a birthday or other special occasion, please check with the teacher first to see what food allergies are in the class. That way you can choose something so everyone can enjoy a treat.

Have your student use the bathroom if needed before class. That will minimize in-class disruptions since we have limited instruction time each week.

Private Lessons:

Private lessons are encouraged and provide an opportunity for the student to work with a master teacher on their instrument/voice. Lessons are focused on the student's individual growth and skills rather than the ensemble's growth. Vocal lessons are not recommended or necessary until the student reaches high school age and/or their voice changes.

Piano, voice, and violin lessons are available at both campuses. Other instruments are on a first-come basis as we have space in the schedule and/or available staff to teach them. We will add more instruments as the need arises. Cost: \$25/half hour lesson. Lessons are paid for the year, and occur weekly as long as OHMI has class that week. There are no refunds if you miss. If you miss a week it is up to the teacher on whether it can be re-scheduled or not. If the teacher has to miss, the lesson will be made up, or a refund for that week will be given.

New students:

New students adding during the school year will be allowed to join the ensembles at the specified times:

Young Strings Class - adding mid-year is up to the teacher's discretion.

- Beginning Band and Orchestra, Guitar only in the first four weeks of class.
- Elementary Music Class and Elementary Chorus after each concert.
- Intermediate Band & Orchestra by audition at the semester break.
- Concert Band, Philharmonic Orchestra, Concert Choir, MS Choir, Advanced Choir, Wind Symphony and Symphony Orchestra by audition following each concert.

Parent Tips for Student Improvement:

- Have your child play/sing their music for you once a week.
- Set up a consistent time and place for practicing.
- Encourage performing outside of OHMI when possible.
- Be supportive.
- Participate in an ensemble yourself!

Does your student want to be a Music Major?

OHMI has had a number of our students who have participated/graduated from the program and gone on to be music majors in college at various universities - Oakland University, St. Olaf's University, Charleston Southern University, Spring Arbor University, Wayne State University, Wheaton College, Albion College, and Western Michigan University to name a few. If this is an area that your student is interested in, the preparation needs to begin sooner than it does for other college majors.

The first thing you can do is discuss your student's interest with their director in 8th or 9th grade.

Our instructors can help steer you in the right direction so your student will be well prepared to be a music major. Discussing the various areas of majoring in music, which colleges are better in which of those areas, etc. are some of the things your director can help you with. High school years are very important for being prepared for college entrance auditions & requirements. Private lessons, participating in Solo & Ensemble Festivals, having a basic background in piano (for voice and other instrumental majors), music theory classes, chamber ensembles, outside performances, etc. will all help to prepare them for college.

Graduation:

As a service to our families, we offer a Commencement Ceremony for graduating high school seniors. There is a meeting in October for families wishing to be involved.

Music Festival Trips:

Every other year OHMI takes their HS students on a trip out of state to experience the culture, music, and atmosphere of other places. We usually attend a music Festival, clinic, and/or do a public performance as well as sightseeing and attend performances where we travel to. Each trip is a little different, but focused on sharing our music, gaining knowledge of other places, expanding their horizons and fostering independence. In the past we have gone to Chicago, Williamsburg, Gatlinburg, Nashville, Cedar Point, Mackinac Island, and Canada! These trips are optional, but encouraged.

Getting involved in your student's music education:

You as the parent do not have to be “musical” to encourage your child in their study of music. Ask them each week what they are learning about, check their assignments for theory homework (choir), what music they are working on, encourage them to listen to music other than what they are singing/playing – including instrumental or vocal music – and play music while they are playing or in the car.

Take them to concerts – which do not always have to be formal – many townships have “Concerts in the Park” during the summer that are free. Check out CDs/mp3s from the local library to listen to. Listen to different styles of music – each culture has a different style. Come to their concerts and encourage their efforts, especially if they are having a hard time in an area. Consider an instrument if your child shows an interest in playing one or joining choir if they like to sing. We encourage all of our students to “cross over” and take an instrument as well as sing in the choir. It will make them a better, well-rounded musician. Children naturally want their parents approval and will be delighted that you are interested in their music.

Health protocols:

- Students who do not feel well should stay home. Productive coughing and sneezing, headache, nausea, vomiting, fever, diarrhea, etc. are reasons to keep them home.
- All students are encouraged to wash hands or use sanitizer as they prepare for class.
- OHMI will have hand sanitizer available at the front desk for use.
- Remind students to cough or sneeze into tissue or sleeve.
- Instrumentalists: Clean instrument in a way that minimizes the risk of spreading germs, including the emptying of instrument condensation.
- The Program Administrator should be notified as soon as possible if a student tests positive for Covid, or any other communicable disease (chickenpox, etc.). If someone in the family is positive for Covid, and the student is exhibiting symptoms before they have been tested, they should also stay home. The student may return to class as long as they are symptom free for at least 24 hours.
- Mask wearing is optional for students and staff, but recommended if one is recovering from a respiratory illness.