



2015 – 2016

[www.killianorchestra.org](http://www.killianorchestra.org)

Orchestra Handbook

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# Welcome

Congratulations! You are a member of a premier organization at Killian Middle School. By enrolling in orchestra your entire family has signed up for a truly unique experience. I hope that you will approach the upcoming year with the same excitement that I have.

Please take the time to read through this handbook as a family. It contains the various policies and procedures concerning the orchestra program. I firmly believe that family support is crucial not only to the success of the student, but to the overall program as well.

After you have read through the handbook in its entirety please sign and return the acknowledgement form.

I hope that this handbook will answer most of your questions. However if you need anything else please don't hesitate to let me know. I am here to make this the best possible musical experience for you and your student.

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## Program Vision

The purpose of the Lewisville Independent School District Orchestra Program is to provide high quality orchestral, ensemble, and solo training for young musicians. The LISD Orchestra Program offers professional musical guidance and a variety of performance and social experiences. Dedicated to the pursuit of excellence in music education and performance, the orchestra provides the opportunity for students to discover within themselves a source of enrichment, beauty, and a meaningful aesthetic expression which will last a lifetime.

## Course Description

This course is designed to introduce the fundamental principles of musicianship. Through this course students will develop a better understanding of music terminology, music literature, playing technique, ensemble performance and concert etiquette. We hope that throughout the year students will be challenged to examine carefully their own musical ability and strive to improve upon the skills they have gained thus far. The ultimate goal of this course is to provide students with the skills needed to successfully participate in music throughout their high school career and beyond.

Students in Orchestra will develop the following skills and concepts:

1. Self-discipline, self-confidence, responsibility and dependable behavior
2. Respect for others, loyalty to the ensemble and pride in the organization
3. Respect for and proper use of equipment
4. The ability to work cooperatively with others toward the performance of music in large and small ensembles
5. A high degree of music reading encompassing: correct rhythm, appropriate tempo, right and left hand technique, dynamics, precision and the ability to be versatile and adjust to any given musical situation
6. A high level of quality artistry through individual musical awareness, control and technical facility
7. The knowledge of a wide variety of orchestral literature
8. A functional knowledge of music history, theory, and terminology
9. The ability to comprehend and foster higher-level thinking skills

# Description of Performing Ensembles

Student placement in a performing ensemble is primarily based upon skill level. Several other factors are taken into consideration such as leadership skills, work ethic, and dedication.

The **Beginner Orchestra** is made up of players with zero to one year of playing experience. Students participating in this ensemble will begin orchestra by focusing on instrument fundamentals, ensemble skills, reading skills, and rehearsal skills. These students will participate in three concerts throughout the year. Beginner Orchestra members will also participate in the Solo & Ensemble Festival and an adjudicated music festival. The beginner orchestra will rehearse as a full orchestra during Mustang Time.

The **Camerata Orchestra** is made up of students with one or more years of playing experience. Students participating in this ensemble will increase their level of musicianship by focusing on ensemble skills, reading skills, musicality, and rehearsal skills. These students will participate in all concerts throughout the year including UIL Concert & Sightreading Contest. Members may also participate in UIL Solo & Ensemble and are strongly encouraged to audition for All District and All Region Orchestra. The Camerata Orchestra will rehearse as a full orchestra during Mustang Time.

The **Chamber Orchestra** features students who demonstrate a high level of musical proficiency on their instruments. Acceptance into this ensemble is based upon prior performance and leadership skills. Students participating in this ensemble will participate in all scheduled concerts throughout the year along with the UIL Concert & Sightreading Contest. Chamber Orchestra students will have sectionals during Mustang Time or after school, depending on schedule.

# Grading Criteria

The orchestra follows the district policy of 50% Major Grades and 50% Minor Grades. There will be a minimum of eight minor grades and two major grades per grading period.

## **Minor Grades – 50%**

1. Rehearsal Technique
2. Sectional/Full Rehearsal

## **Major Grades – 50%**

1. Major Assessment
2. Project Based Learning
3. Concert Performance

Instrumental skill is developed progressively. Any musical technique must be mastered before new techniques are introduced. Each class must progress together. Any playing test receiving less than a 90% must be re-tested until a 90% or higher is achieved. Students may retake any playing test until they are satisfied with their grade up until the date of performance.

# Concert Attendance

Orchestra is a performance-based course. Students are required to attend all curricular performances listed on the Calendar of Events. Students will receive a major grade for each concert. Students must attend the entire concert to receive credit.

## Absence Policy

All students are required to attend all sectionals, after school rehearsals, and performances. Some situations warrant an excused absence from events. Excused absences will be considered for the following reasons:

- Medical Emergency
- Death in the family
- Religious Holiday
- Excused school absence
- One time family event such as a wedding (Must be approved in advance, by the director)

Excused absences are granted at the discretion of the director. Please adhere to the following timeline when requesting excused absences:

- Rehearsal outside of the school day – **3 school days** in advance
- Concerts and Major Performances – **10 school days** in advance
- Contest or Festival – **At least 1 month** in advance

All absences require communication between the parent and director. Verbal or written excuses from students are not acceptable. If a student has an unexcused absence from either a rehearsal or concert, the student may not be eligible to attend elective orchestra trips or socials.



# Sectionals

Sectionals are a large part of our success as a group. Students must attend all sectionals scheduled for their ensemble/instrument. During sectionals we will work on All-Region audition music, playing technique, music for performances and contests, and Solo and Ensemble repertoire.

Not all ensembles will participate in sectionals every week. Students will be notified in advance as to specific times/dates when their orchestra will be attending sectionals. Mustang Time will be utilized for sectionals. It is the intent of the orchestra program to minimize sectionals beyond school hours.

## Information regarding other activities during sectional time

- **Tutorials** - If at all possible, please try to arrange to attend any needed tutorials at a time that does not conflict with your sectional. If you must attend a tutorial during sectional time, be sure to communicate with your director ahead of time as this may affect what is covered during the sectional. A student will always be allowed to attend tutorials when needed, but he or she is responsible for making up work done during the missed sectional.
- **Play practice and other performing groups** – A student has one free absence from a sectional for these types of activities, but you must communicate with the director ahead of the sectional.
- **Athletics** –We generally will NOT schedule sectionals on game days for sections that have students involved.
- **Family emergency** - You must turn in a parent note to your director the next time you are in orchestra class following the missed sectional.
- **Clubs** - Club meetings are not excused. If there are extenuating circumstances, see your director and we can most likely work something out.
- **Sports outside of school** - Non-school related sports (clubs, Little League, etc.) are not excused unless permission is requested in advance and approved by the director.
- **Doctor appointments** - Please try to avoid scheduling doctor, dentist, and orthodontist appointments during sectional time.

# Eligibility

Rehearsals, sectionals, and concerts are considered co-curricular activities, and Orchestra members may attend these events regardless of academic standing. All Region Auditions/Concerts, Solo and Ensemble Contest, UIL Concert and Sight Reading Contest, and other concert contests/festivals, as well as trips, are considered extracurricular. A student receiving a grade below 70 in any class during a six weeks grading period will be ineligible for any extracurricular activity the orchestra takes part in until the next progress report or report card shows that they are passing ALL of their classes.

This policy has been a part of Texas State Law since 1984, and there can be NO exceptions made for any student, so be sure to keep up with your grades in all classes. The most common cause for student failure in a class is failure to turn in assignments.

In addition to UIL eligibility requirements, students must meet other criteria before attending orchestra events outside of school such as playing tests, music pass offs, at home practice, and sectional attendance.

## Definition of Extracurricular Activity

### 19 TAC §76.1001, Subchapter AA

(a) An extracurricular activity is an activity sponsored by the University Interscholastic League (UIL), the school district board of trustees, or an organization sanctioned by resolution of the board of trustees. The activity is not necessarily directly related to instruction of the essential knowledge and skills but may have an indirect relation to some areas of the curriculum. Extracurricular activities include, but are not limited to, public performances, contests, demonstrations, displays, and club activities, with the exception of public performances specified in paragraph (2) of this subsection

Please refer to the UIL Side by Side for further information:

<http://www.uil texas.org/policy/tea-uil-side-by-side>

# Orchestra Expectations

In order to perform at a high level certain expectations are required on a daily basis. Students must adhere to all orchestra expectations!

## Rehearsal Expectations

- All students should be in their seats with their materials by the time the tardy bell rings.
- Respect your classmates and the orchestra room!.
- Listen for the entirety of the rehearsal. If you have a question, raise your hand.
- Have **YOUR** instrument, music, pencil, and all required equipment at your chair.
- When the conductor stops, immediately stop playing and wait for instructions.

## Rehearsal Facilities

- Food, drinks, gum, and candy are not allowed in the orchestra room!
- Instrument lockers are to be kept clean at all times.
- Keep the orchestra room clean. If you see trash, pick it up.
- Chairs and stands will be properly stored when not in use.
- Practice rooms are for music practice only.
- Only authorized students are allowed in the storage rooms, office, and the music library.
- Non-Orchestra members are not allowed in the orchestra room unless they have permission from the director.

## Music

- Music will be passed out one time only. If you are absent, it is your responsibility to obtain the music outside of rehearsal time.
- All music must be at every rehearsal with its owner. Do not assume your stand partner will bring theirs.
- Write bowings, fingerings, etc. immediately when you are given the information.

# Instruments

All students must acquire an instrument to participate in orchestra. The instrument must possess certain markers of quality, including working fine tuners, pegs and fingerboard made of ebony wood, and bow hair made from real horse hair. Additionally the instrument must be of natural wood color. Painted instruments are novelty instruments. Please avoid purchasing instruments online. It is very important to play on an instrument prior to purchasing.

## **Cello/Bass**

Cellos and Bases should have a personal instrument. However, Lewisville ISD will provide the student with instruments to use at school for an annual fee of **\$100**. Your personal instrument will then become your “stay at home” instrument. You will use this for at-home practice and some performances. This policy is in place to reduce the need to transport large instruments on a daily basis. It is very important that each student has his or her own personal instrument in order to complete the necessary home practice. Your child is responsible for taking proper care of this instrument. If this instrument incurs any damage due to neglect or improper use, you will be held responsible for the repair or replacement costs.

## **Instrument Lockers (Violin & Viola)**

All violin and viola players are provided with an instrument slot. It is the student’s responsibility to keep their instrument and supplies clearly labeled with their name. Lewisville ISD is not responsible for lost or stolen items. The room should only contain materials needed for orchestra class.

## **Instrument Repair**

All instruments should be kept in excellent playing condition. This includes regular bow re-hairs and string replacement. If your instrument is in need of repair please contact your director immediately. Do not try to repair the instrument yourself! If an instrument is put in the shop the student needs to give his or her director a note describing the circumstances no later than the first class day of the occurrence.

# Orchestra Supplies

It is expected that students come with all of their materials on a daily basis. Not having the supplies will affect the student's rehearsal grade.

## Supplies

- Download TonalEnergy for 1:X device
- App to write, highlight or draw on downloaded media. Writeonpdf recommended.
- Recommended: extra set of strings. Synthetic Core Strings recommended - Dominant or Zyex for violins and violas. Crown or Larsen for cello.
- Shoulder rest - violins and violas – Everest brand preferred
- Rock stop - cellos and basses
- Folding music stand – recommended for home practice
- Orchestra Uniform – Informal and Formal

## Uniform Requirements

We not only want to sound like an outstanding group, we want to look like an outstanding group. In order to accomplish this, all students must follow the orchestra dress code for concerts. Students will be notified in advance as to whether the concert will be informal or formal.

**\* Uniforms must be clean and wrinkle free for every performance**

**Informal** – Killian Middle School Orchestra T-shirt, blue jeans and tennis shoes.

### **Formal:**

- Ladies – Black long dress or black dress shirt, black dress pants, black closed-toed flats (no heels)
- Men – Black dress shirt, black dress pants, black belt, black dress shoes, long black socks.

**\*\*Uniform violations may result in exclusion from concert participation\*\***

## Private Lessons

The private lesson program in Lewisville ISD is a great resource for students of all ability levels. As teachers, we try to individualize instruction as much as possible. However, we cannot recreate the environment that takes place in a private lesson setting.

When enrolled in private lessons, students will be placed with an expert on his or her instrument. They will then meet with their teacher during orchestra rehearsal or after school on a weekly basis (depending on the private teacher's schedule). During this time the teacher will focus on the individual needs of that student.

A common misconception is that private lessons are only for those students who are behind. This is not true! Private lessons are an outstanding way to increase your ability level no matter where you're at now!

The private lesson rate is set by Lewisville ISD and is billed directly by the private teacher. Additional information and enrollment forms are available by request.

## Orchestra Fee

Rather than requesting several different payments from students throughout the year, every student will pay a one time Orchestra Fee of **\$50 for Beginners** and **\$75 for Advanced Orchestras**. This payment will cover the cost of several orchestra expenses. An annual budget will be presented at the parent meeting and will be voted on by members. The program fee does not cover optional trips, or any other miscellaneous items that come up throughout the year.

The fee is required for all orchestra members. Scholarships are available to students. If there is a financial concern with the program fee please contact the orchestra director to make arrangements.

All fees and fee payments will be posted on the CHARMS website under the financial section. Payments may be made with cash, check, or money order. If you are paying by cash please send the exact amount. Checks and money orders must be made out to **Killian Orchestra Booster Club**. Please attach all payments to the fee payment form.

## Charms Office Assistant

Charms Office Assistant is our way of keeping in touch with you! This program allows us to send e-mails, send concert reminders, prepare for trips, prepare for concerts, and keep your information up to date with us. Please utilize this tool in communicating with us. The most important thing you can do for us is to update you and your student's information!

### How to Access Parent Information



- Log on to [www.charmsoffice.com](http://www.charmsoffice.com)
- Locate the “PARENT/STUDENT LOGIN” section of the web page.
- Login to your child's program account using the following login:

**KillianMSOrch**

- This will bring up the main parent page. This will allow you to look at your child's program's **public calendar, event list, handouts and other files**.
- Clicking on an event on the calendar brings up the details for that event, such as times, attendance requirements and equipment/uniform necessities. Clicking on “event list” puts all of the calendar information in a list form for easy printing.
- When you enter your child's ID NUMBER, another more detailed screen appears with even more options to view your student's uniform assignments, music assignments, financial records, forms and inventory. Enter your child's ID FIRST – then you may create your own, unique password by clicking on the “**keys** icon”
- One area in which you can help the director maintain his/her records:
  - **Student information form** – you may help make changes to your child's student information page (such as updating phone numbers and email addresses if they change) to help the teacher communicate with you more effectively.
- Most importantly, the parent page assists both you and the teacher to communicate with each other.