

JOHN PAUL STEVENS HIGH SCHOOL ORCHESTRA HANDBOOK 2008-2009



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JOHN PAUL STEVENS HIGH SCHOOL

John Paul Stevens High School opened in 2005 on a site made famous by another John Paul. Located west of Seaworld at Potranco Road and North Ellison Drive on the 75-acre site of the 1987 Papal Mass, the new high school is one of nine new schools approved by voters in the 2001 Bond Issue.

The namesake, Justice John Paul Stevens is currently serving on the Supreme



Court. He was appointed by President Gerald Ford in 1975. Justice Stevens considered becoming a teacher before joining the Navy during World War II where he received the Bronze Star. A Chicago native, Stevens attended the University of Chicago earning his degree in English literature. He earned his law degree from Northwestern University (Illinois).

Justice Stevens authored the majority opinion in 2001 that provided for equal access for disabled athletes, specifically allowing a disabled golfer to use a cart during PGA competitions (PGA v Martin). He also wrote the majority decision that the Constitution does not grant a sitting President immunity from civil litigation (Clinton v Jones). Justice Stevens is highly respected for his integrity, honesty and impartiality.



THE DIRECTOR

A native of the Philippines, Nile Mendoza Wilson began studying violin at the age of 10. By the time she was 16, she was already performing with professional orchestras in the Philippines. Mrs. Wilson graduated with a Bachelor's Degree in Music Education from St. Scholastica's College in Manila and served as a music educator and professional orchestra musician in her home country until she immigrated into the United States in 2001.

Following a successful audition, Mrs. Wilson was selected as one of Old Dominion University's (ODU) F. Ludwig Diehn Scholarship recipients and was given the opportunity to take graduate studies in violin with Mr. Vahn Armstrong, concertmaster of the Virginia Symphony. In May 2004, she graduated with a degree of Master of Science in General Secondary Education with an Interest in Music. During her stay at ODU, Mrs. Wilson did not only maintain a high level of academic achievement, but succeeded in the areas of performance and leadership as well. She was one of the founding members of the American String Teachers' Association with NSOA - ODU Student Chapter and served as an officer until her graduation. She served as the concertmaster of the ODU Symphony Orchestra and was the first violinist of the Diehn String Quartet, an ensemble composed of the orchestra's principal string players. She was chosen as one of the winners of ODU's Third Annual Concerto Competition and appeared as a soloist with the Symphony Orchestra. She has participated in chamber music and solo violin masterclasses sponsored by the Virginia Symphony Orchestra. Mrs. Wilson has also contributed to the community music scene by performing with the Virginia Beach Symphony Orchestra and occasionally serving as the group's principal second violin and concertmaster. In 2005 Mrs. Wilson won 2nd place in the Regional Scottish Fiddling Competition (Houston) and received the "Best New Competitor" award in the U.S. National Scottish Fiddling Championship after less than a year of studying traditional Scottish fiddling.

As an educator, Mrs. Wilson taught general music to preschool and 5th grade students at the Ateneo de Manila Grade School and violin to 6th and 7th grade students of the De La Salle Zobel School, two of the most prestigious schools in the Philippines. She also taught violin for the Academy of Music in Norfolk, VA and beginning violin to 5th grade students of the Northside Independent School District in San Antonio, TX. While still considered a young educator, Mrs. Wilson has been praised by her colleagues for the quality of students she has produced during her first few years of teaching in the United States. Her advanced private students have been accepted to well-known musical organizations for the youth such as the Bay Youth Orchestras of Virginia, the Brevard Music Camp in North Carolina, and the Interlochen Arts Camp in Michigan. Her most recent accomplishment was in 2008, when the Orchestras of John Paul Stevens High School earned their first 5A Varsity University Interscholastic League (UIL) and second consecutive 5A non-varsity UIL first division sweepstakes under her direction within the first two years of the school's opening.

Beginning in the 2008-2009 school year, Mrs. Wilson will be on the artistic staff of the Youth Orchestras of San Antonio (YOSA) as the conductor of the Capriccio Orchestra.

Mrs. Wilson currently resides in San Antonio, TX with her husband, Drew, daughter Sophia and a beloved menagerie.



CONTACT THE DIRECTOR

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Tutorials are at 8:00-8:35 AM and 4:05-4:30 PM. Students do not need to make an appointment for tutorials.

For parent conferences, a 24-hour notice is required.

PHILOSOPHY AND MISSION STATEMENT

John Paul Stevens High School in San Antonio, Texas opened in 2005 with a student population of 1,800. Like any other program at John Paul Stevens High School, the orchestra program emphasizes the importance of **QUALITY WORK**.

The orchestra program aims to provide an enjoyable learning environment where students can develop skills that are necessary to become competent and independent musicians who are capable of playing alone or with others: technical facility on one's instrument; a thorough understanding of music history and theory; practicing efficiently without teacher direction; creative musical expression; and creative thinking.

To contribute to the success of the group, orchestra students experience a professional environment in an educational setting. The director immerses the students in practices, protocol, and etiquette identical to those followed by professional orchestras to drive learning, stage presence, and performance standards to the highest level.

To aid students in becoming better musicians, students are educated on issues that are not musical in nature but have a direct effect on the learning process and music performance. These issues include but are not limited to performance anxiety or "stage fright", performance-related injuries, and stress. Awareness of these issues increase students' ability to achieve goals by "working smart" instead of working too hard.

The Comprehensive Musicianship Program (CMP) is an interdisciplinary approach to music education that has been adapted to suit the needs of the orchestra program in educating a "whole musician": someone who truly knows and understands music beyond knowing how to play it. Performance is only **ONE** aspect of being a part of an educational performing ensemble. By focusing on performance alone, students do not experience the full benefits of an education in music. By integrating the CMP with music performance, students receive a music education that allows them to become competent musicians **AND** musicians who have a deeper understanding and appreciation of music.

The CMP aims to make orchestra parents more involved in their child's music education through the portfolio system. All CMP activities and projects go into a student's online portfolio maintained through SmartMusic Impact and Practica Musica WebStudents. So often in performing ensembles such as orchestra do we focus solely on the finished product—the concert—that we forget that there is a process that creates this product. Through the portfolio system, parents are given the opportunity to periodically review their child's work and performance in class. In most cases, parents can look at the actual student work instead of merely looking at grades. The more involved the parents are with the process, the more appreciative they will be of the finished product.



INSTRUMENT TECHNIQUE	ESSENTIAL MUSICAL SKILLS	MUSIC APPRECIATION & MUSICAL EXPRESSION	OTHER IMPORTANT LESSONS
<p>Left and right hand coordination</p> <p>“Fingerboard geography” (instrument positions) and shifting</p> <p>Vibrato</p> <p>A wide repertoire of bow strokes and when to use them appropriately</p> <p>Principles of sound production</p>	<p>Musical symbols and their functions</p> <p>Accurate sight-reading of notes and rhythms</p> <p>Visual and aural recognition of pitch, intervals, and tonality</p> <p>Elements of music (rhythm, melody, harmony, dynamics, timbre, texture)</p> <p>Playing and singing in tune</p> <p>Playing alone and with others</p> <p>Directing a group and teaching other students</p>	<p>A wide variety of repertoire</p> <p>Stylistic performance of repertoire</p> <p>Music in relation historical and cultural context</p> <p>Music in relation to the students’ lives and experiences</p> <p>Performing with phrasing and musical expression</p> <p>Proper audience etiquette</p> <p>Objective evaluation and constructive criticism of performances</p>	<p>Proper social and job etiquette</p> <p>A professional work ethic</p> <p>Strategies for more efficient individual practice</p> <p>Musician health and the prevention of performance-related injuries</p> <p>Strategies for a performance anxiety-free performance</p> <p>Team work</p> <p>Self-discipline</p>

SEATING SYSTEM

In every orchestra class, there will be a mix of students who have already achieved an exemplary level of musicianship, developing musicians, and students who are struggling. In this program, every student is important to the success of the orchestra, whether they are gifted, developing, or struggling.

Competition, according to one music educator, is where many persons must lose in order for a few to win a prized status. Contrary to popular belief, not all orchestra musicians are motivated by competition. The majority of students join orchestra simply because they love music and enjoy performing. This orchestra program aims to continue its tradition of completely eradicating any form of hostile competition between peers. Instead, the program will foster an environment where students help each other succeed. For this purpose, the Advanced Placement Seating (APS) System will be used.

The APS System is a system followed by many college and professional orchestras. This system allows the orchestra to sound at its maximum efficiency by placing strong players all around the orchestra, not just in stands closest to the conductor. The APS System satisfies both the competitive and the non-competitive student. Strong players who want to play leadership roles in the orchestra are given the opportunity to audition for section leader positions. Students who are happy just to be a part of the orchestra are seated in a NON-HIERARCHAL order in complementary pairs. The APS System also makes use of rotational seating system wherein ALL STANDS will rotate at the beginning of the week and keep that same seating assignment until the end of that week. This rotation will allow the students to experience the different challenges of sitting in different stands in their section. Violinists (with exception to the concertmaster) rotate between the 1st and 2nd violin sections to experience the unique challenges in each part.

At Stevens High school, every student is given the opportunity to give a significant contribution to their group because their importance is not attached to a chair.

CLASS ASSIGNMENT

Students will be placed into Fundamental Strings, Intermediate Ensemble, Prelude Orchestra, Concert Orchestra, or Chamber Orchestra.

Fundamental Strings is a class for beginning string students.

Intermediate Strings is a class composed of students who have less than two years of performing experience or students who need to strengthen basic string technique.

The Prelude Orchestra is a training orchestra composed of freshmen, students new to the Stevens High School, and orchestra students who are returning to orchestra after a hiatus. Placement in this orchestra will help students solidify their instrumental technique and prepare them for more advanced technique and repertoire. For most students, placement in this orchestra is a pre-requisite for placement in the Concert and Chamber Orchestras.

The Concert Orchestra is composed primarily of students who are ready to learn more advanced string techniques and perform more challenging repertoire. 9th graders who meet the performance criteria may be placed in this group.

The Chamber Orchestra is composed of students who have achieved the highest level of proficiency on their instruments, demonstrated their commitment to the organization and to learning, and the ability to consistently model proper orchestra behavior. This orchestra is composed primarily of students in grades 10-12, but 9th graders who have demonstrated a high level of musical achievement may be placed in this group. Chamber Orchestra students are required to have passing semester grades in all courses. Students who fail to meet this requirement will be transferred to a different group the following school year.

PLACEMENT AUDITIONS

For students currently enrolled at Stevens HS and its feeder schools, auditions for the following school year will be held in May of the current school year. Students who are transferring into Stevens HS from a school that does not belong to the Stevens HS cluster must contact the director to schedule an audition.

Current Stevens HS Orchestra students

This placement exam will serve as the 2nd semester final exam:

- An etude or an excerpt from orchestral repertoire that will test how well you have learned skills that have been taught during the school year; this material will be chosen by the director and will be distributed at the beginning of the final grading period.
- One major scale AND one minor scale (including two to three types of minor scales) that each student will randomly “pull out of the hat”; the list of scales changes every school year and will be based on the key signatures of repertoire learned during the school year
- Placement in an orchestra will also be determined by a student’s overall performance and attitude during the current school year.

Incoming freshmen and transferees

- A solo that best showcases a student's technique and musicality
- A two or three-octave major AND minor scale of the student's choice that includes shifting to at least 3rd position
- The director will also consider the recommendation of the student's former orchestra director

Fine Arts Academy Students

Please refer to the Fine Arts Academy application packet for more information.

SECTION LEADER AUDITIONS

Concert and Chamber Orchestra

Section leader and assistant section leader positions for Concert and Chamber Orchestras are open to current Stevens HS Orchestra students. The following is required to be considered for these positions:

- Section Leader Application Form (audition music will not be released until this form has been submitted to the director)
- An audition that consists of performance of excerpts from orchestral repertoire and sight-reading
- Good academic standing throughout the entire school year
- Good character and leadership qualities exhibited throughout the entire school year

Prelude Orchestra

Section leader and assistant section leader positions for Prelude Orchestra will be assigned by the director through assessment of each student’s skills, attitude, and leadership potential demonstrated during the first few weeks of school. Some positions may also be filled before the start of the school year. In this instance, the appointment will be based on a student’s placement audition and the recommendation and assessment of the student’s previous orchestra director.

Fundamental and Intermediate Strings

Section leaders will not be assigned for these ensembles.

Challenging section leaders

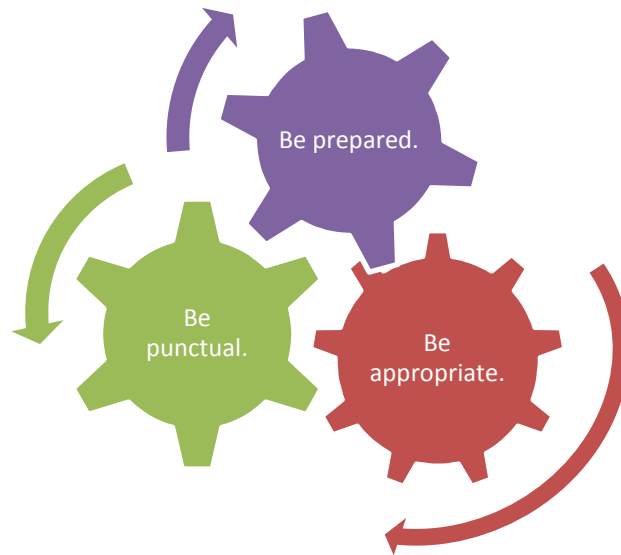
Students in Prelude, Concert, and Chamber Orchestras may be assigned section leader and assistant section leader positions without an audition. Students who become section leaders without undergoing an audition may be challenged for their position by students in the same orchestra.

Procedure

- Notify the director AND the section leader you want to challenge no later than three weeks before a concert. Violinists may only challenge leaders of the section in which they currently play (e.g. 2nd violinists may only challenge 2nd violin section leaders).
- The current section leader and the challenger will perform excerpts from current repertoire. The audition will be blind. The director may allow students from that class to select the student with the best performance as the winner of the challenge.
- Positions earned during a challenge will only be effective for the current concert and rehearsals leading to that concert. The director-appointed section leader will regain his or her position at the next concert but may be challenged throughout the school year.



There are three simple rules that students must observe:



“If I follow the rules, what’s in it for me?”

Here are just a few benefits for following the rules:

- *Increased productivity*
- *Efficient use of learning time*
- *Actually enjoying the class instead of just “being there”*
- *Increased learning*
- *Earning the respect of your classmates and peers*

“What if I don’t follow the rules?”

Here some of the consequences that result in choosing to disobey the rules:

- *Distractions that prevent the group from functioning efficiently*
- *Decreased productivity and less fun*
- *Tension with your classmates, peers, and teacher*
- *A trip to an administrator’s office and an appropriate consequence for your inappropriate behavior*
- *Because the orchestra is a team, remember that your actions affect the entire group.*

CHOOSE WISELY. YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE OUTCOME OF YOUR ACTIONS!

REMOVAL FROM THE ORCHESTRA PROGRAM

The following are grounds for immediate removal from the orchestra program:

- Blatant or habitual disrespect and insubordination towards the director
- Habitual disruption of class
- Violation of orchestra policies
- Frequent absenteeism and truancy from class without any valid excuse
- Refusal to pay for district-required instrument usage fees (only applies to students who need NISD instruments)
- More than one unexcused absence from a performance
- Consistent below average performance due to lack of effort

If immediate removal is not possible due to scheduling conflicts, the director has the right to refuse a student enrollment for the next school year.

CLASSROOM PROCEDURE

A policy is a set of rules that govern acceptable behavior and correct operational procedures.

A procedure is a series of steps that are followed to achieve a goal with the most efficiency. We are not strangers to procedure as we follow procedure in our daily tasks. For example, when we cook or bake, we follow the steps enumerated in a recipe book. Procedures are in place to make a task easier. Procedures in the classroom are in place to make daily tasks run smoothly with minimal or no instructions. If procedures are followed, there will be more time for learning.

Leaving your seat

Policy

- During the class period, only one student at a time is allowed to be out of the classroom.
- Students must not ask permission to leave the classroom during the first 10 minutes and the last 10 minutes of class and before and during the instrument warm-up period.
- Students do not need to ask permission to leave the classroom during the passing period but are expected to return on time.
- Students are allowed a maximum of 4 minutes to use the restroom. Students may be reported for truancy if he or she is out of the classroom more than 4 minutes.
- The director may revoke the restroom privilege from students who abuse it.
- Students are not allowed to leave the classroom to see other teachers, students, counselors and administrators (except in an emergency), or attend to other business during class.
- Students must have either the official pink hall pass or the official restroom pass whenever they leave the classroom during the period. These passes must be visible to avoid being questioned by hall monitors and teachers.

CLASSROOM PROCEDURE

Leaving your seat

Procedure

- If you need to sharpen your pencil, throw trash, or retrieve something from your instrument locker, you do not need to ask permission, but limit your trips so as to not distract your classmates
- Do not interrupt the lesson if you want to go to the restroom. Use the restroom hand signal (closed fist held up discreetly so the director can see it) to ask to go to the restroom. If the director nods, you may proceed. If the director shakes her head, you will need to stay in your seat.
- If you need to see the nurse, approach the director. If your request is approved, fill out a pink pass and have the director sign it.

If you arrive late

Procedure

- Enter through the back door
- Present a tardy slip or a pass to the director
- Perform the physical warm-up routine in the back of the room
- Tune outside the classroom
- You may join the rehearsal after you have performed these tasks

When you return to class from an absence

Procedure

- Check the assignment/exam board in the back of the room to see if you missed any work; then look in the make-up work envelope for your class to see if there is an assignment/exam sheet with your name on it. Not all assignments will have written instructions, but make it a habit to check the make-up work envelope to make sure you do not miss anything.
- "ASK THREE BEFORE ME." Three attendance monitors will be assigned for each class on a rotating basis. Always talk to one of the attendance monitors for more details on the missed assignment; if you still need clarification after approaching the attendance monitors, see the director.
- Check the rehearsal schedule on the bulletin board to see if you missed a rehearsal
- Refer to the make-up work chart on page 14 to determine what you need to do to receive credit for missed work or rehearsals.

ATTENDANCE

Policy

- Students are expected to attend ALL orchestra rehearsals, sectional rehearsals, and performances, including all rehearsals scheduled before school or after school.
- Each performance or rehearsal will be counted as a separate event even if they occur on the same day.
- Because the rehearsal and performance schedule is distributed to parents and students well in advance, parents and students are expected to make arrangements for the student to be present at rehearsals or performances. Transportation problems are unacceptable excuses.
- Students are expected to be punctual at all times. Students must be in their seats with their instruments and materials ready and accessible one minute—at the very least—before the posted rehearsal time.
- The Attendance Office will determine if an absence or tardy during regular class hours is excused or unexcused. The director will determine if an absence or tardy from before school or after school rehearsals or performances is excused or unexcused.

ATTENDANCE

Policy

- If an absence from daily rehearsals has been excused by the Attendance Office, notify your director of the excused absence dates to expedite grade changes.
- Students who are more than 10 minutes late to a rehearsal or performance will be marked absent and will be graded as such.
- An absence or tardy cannot be excused without proper documentation, but submitting documentation does not guarantee that an absence or tardy will be excused.
- Please refer to the make-up work chart on page 14 to determine what documentation is needed for an absence.

ATTENDANCE RECOVERY

Policy

The following changes to Attendance Recovery have been made this school year:

- Attendance Recovery sessions are held on Saturdays at 8:45-11:45 AM and during the school week before and after school.
- Students may no longer complete attendance recovery tasks without first obtaining approval. Approval may only be obtained through a conference that involves the director, student, parent, counselor, and an administrator.

After students have been given approval for Attendance Recovery tasks, they may do the following:

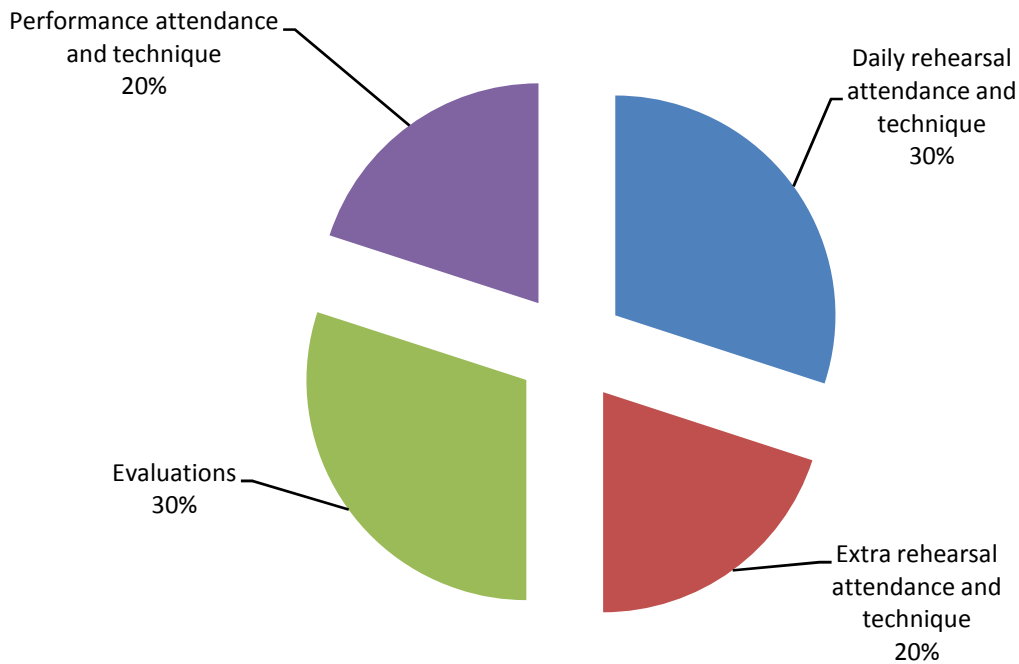
- Attend a performance of a student or professional performing groups. Students must submit a one-page essay (double-spaced, font no smaller than arial 10 pt.) about their impressions about the performance Proof of attendance is also required: for student performances, a souvenir program or ticket stub signed and dated by the program directors is required; for a professional performance, a ticket stub or souvenir program is required.. A maximum of 1.5 hours will be awarded if this option is selected. This option for Attendance Recovery will not be honored if prior clearance from the director has not been obtained.
- Request additional duties from the director

Remember, you must obtain approval from your director BEFORE completing an Attendance Recovery task.

STUDENTS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR MISSED WORK!



GRADING CRITERIA



ATTENDANCE AND TECHNIQUE GRADES

“How easy is it to get a 100?”

Very! Just satisfy the following expectations:

- *Follow rules and procedures*
- *Be in your seat at least one minute before the published rehearsal time*
- *Observe proper posture and instrument position*
- *Actively participate in class activities*

ATTENDANCE AND TECHNIQUE GRADES

“How do I get deductions?”

The following will earn you point deductions:

- *Each instance of failure to satisfy an expectation will warrant a 20-point deduction*
- *An automatic 60 will be given for the following: bringing or consuming food or drink in the classroom; unacceptable fingernail length; gum chewing*
- *An automatic 0 will be given for the following: absence; more than 10 minutes late for class; forgetting one’s instrument; refusal to participate*



EVALUATIONS

School work in this category measures student learning and improvement. Evaluations may include performance tests, written tests, group projects, and music theory mastery assignments.

Technology applications such as SmartMusic (performance and practice software), Gaggle (safe student email approved by the district), and Practica Musica WebStudents (music theory tutorial and mastery) will be used as part of the orchestra curriculum. Because use of these applications is a course requirement, students will have access to them in school at no cost. To make sure your child is allowed to access school computers, be sure to submit the district's Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) document to at the beginning of the school year.

All freshmen, beginners, and intermediate students are required to complete three Practica Musica exercises each grading period. Fine Arts Academy students are required to complete five exercises per grading period as an individual study course to prepare them for AP Music Theory. Students in Concert and Chamber Orchestras may complete up to five exercises per grading period for extra credit. Each exercise will count as one extra credit point applied to the Evaluations category.

MISSING AND LATE WORK

Policy

- When a student fails to submit an assignment, the director will mark "M" in the grade book until the student completes the assignment. A grade will be assigned once that assignment is completed. If the assignment is not completed, the student will receive a zero.
- Students who failed to submit work on the posted deadline will receive the following deductions:
 One day late – 10 points Two days late – 15 points Three days late – 20 points
- Late work may only be completed in the Orchestra Room during tutorial times (Monday-Friday, 8:00-8:30 AM and 4:05-4:30 PM).
- The director will not accept late work beyond three days past the deadline.
- Students must talk to the director BEFORE the deadline if work cannot be completed on time. Students will have to make their case on why an extension is needed, but not all requests for extensions will be granted.

SIX WEEK GRADES AND INCOMPLETES

Policy

- A student who is failing because of work missed incurred during EXCUSED absences (including school business) may request for an "Incomplete" or "I" by completing a grade contract signed by the student and his or her parent. An Incomplete will not be given unless a request is made by the student.
- A student with an incomplete will have ONE WEEK after the end of the six weeks to make up his or her work.
- A student will be ineligible to participate in extra-curricular activities until work is made up with a passing grade and the Incomplete has been cleared by the director.
- In an effort to stay true to the school's vision, ALL students will have an opportunity to improve their six weeks grade. Students will be given a TWO-WEEK window after the end of the grading cycle to accomplish this. A student who wishes to improve his or her grade must file a request with the director by completing a grade contract signed by the student and his or her parent. The contract will list the assignments, projects, or tests the student needs to complete in order to improve the grade.

MAKE-UP WORK

See the Make-Up Work Chart on page 14 of this handbook for more information.

MAKE-UP WORK CHART

Missed Work	Absence Form Required?	Make-Up Activity	Time Limit
Sectionals	No	Practice for the same duration as the missed rehearsal before school, during lunch, or after school.	Within 4 school days of the student's return to school
Combined group or full orchestra rehearsals	Yes	If the absence is excused, make-up is not needed. Grade will be "proportioned" If absence is unexcused, practice for TWO 45-minute sessions before school, during lunch, or after school	Within 4 school days of the student's return to school
Dress rehearsal	Yes	If the absence is excused, make-up is not needed. Grade will be "proportioned" If absence is unexcused, practice for TWO 45-minute sessions before school, during lunch, or after school. You will be allowed to join the performance but will receive a 40-point deduction in your Performance Attendance and Technique grade.	Within 4 school days of the student's return to school
Performance	Yes - Remember that having more than one unexcused absence from a performance is grounds for removal from orchestra	Submit this project regardless of whether your absence is excused or unexcused: A video recording of yourself performing concert music in VHS or DVD format (70 points); you must count bars of rests out loud; you may not skip rests A written report containing well-researched information about the performance music and their composers (30 points); this report must be word processed and must include a bibliography/reference list	Within 5 school days of the missed performance
Make-up for rehearsals or performances not completed within the time limit	Yes - Required to file for an extension	If the extension request is granted, you will be given 4 additional school days to complete the make-up rehearsal.	Within 4 school days of the extension approval
Any written work	No	Retrieve written work from the envelope for your class period in the make-up work box outside the director's office.	Within 3 school days of the student's return to school
Any performance test	No	Check the performance test board in the back of the Orchestra Room to see if you missed any performance tests. You will perform this same test(s) for the director.	Immediately upon return to class unless the director schedules otherwise
Late work	No	Late work will be accepted with deductions up to three days past the deadline. Work that is beyond three days late will not be accepted.	

****What does it mean to "proportion" a grade? This is a method of assigning a grade to a missing assignment that is consistent with a student's performance in class. The proportioned grade is attained by computing the average of a student's four most current grades in the same category as the missed work. The average will become the student's proportioned grade.**

ELIGIBILITY

It is very important that each student maintains passing grades in ALL classes. Most orchestra activities are co-curricular (graded activities that satisfy curriculum requirements). However, any student who is not passing one or more classes may not participate in any extra-curricular activity such as Region Orchestra, UIL Solo and Ensemble Contest, UIL Concert and Sight-reading Competition, and orchestra trips and festivals. If you are having difficulty in passing a class, please notify your director.

REGION ORCHESTRA, ALL-STATE ORCHESTRA, AND UIL EVENTS

While participation in these events is optional, the director encourages it. These activities are excellent vehicles for musical growth. To support students who are interested in pursuing these activities, the director will set up individual or group coaching sessions upon request.

HOME PRACTICE

It goes without saying that all orchestra students must be prepared with their individual parts BEFORE coming to rehearsals even if the director does not require students to turn in practice logs. How much practice is necessary? However long it takes to produce quality work! Just remember to observe healthy musician habits (such as warming up and stretching before you play; taking substantial breaks during long practice sessions; and avoiding too much repetition of the same musical passages) when you practice to keep yourself injury-free!

PRIVATE LESSONS

Private lessons are not required but encouraged. To make private lessons more accessible to students, several district-approved instructors will be allowed to teach private lessons during all orchestra classes and all lunches. Scheduling and payment arrangements must be made directly with the private instructor. Please notify the director if you need a list of district-approved private instructors.



MATERIALS AND FEES

**REQUIRED MATERIALS
ALL STUDENTS**

- An identification tag for your instrument
- An instrument (a limited number of school violas, cellos, and basses are available)
- A lint-free cleaning cloth
- Good quality rosin
- Several No. 2 pencils with good erasers
- Blue or black pens
- Violin, viola, and cello: An extra set of strings plus two more of the two highest strings
- Cello and bass: A rock stop or endpin anchor
- Violin and viola: A shoulder rest if you use one
- A sturdy combination lock for your instrument locker if you will be using your
- Appropriate shoes and socks/stockings for your concert uniform

**REQUIRED FEES
ALL STUDENTS**

- Dry-cleaning fee - \$15.00
- Official polo shirt - \$17.00 (S-XL); \$21 (2XL-3XL)
- Instrument usage fee (for students who will be using school instruments) - \$30.00

**REQUIRED MATERIALS
CLASS-SPECIFIC**

Fundamental Strings

- Essential Elements for Strings 2000, Bk. 1
- Essential Elements for Strings 2000, Bk. 2

Intermediate Strings

- Essential Elements for Strings 2000, Bk. 2
- Essential Technique for Strings 2000, Bk. 3

Prelude, Concert, and Chamber Orchestras

- Advanced Technique for Strings
- Essentials for Strings
- A Tourte rubber mute

RECOMMENDED MATERIALS

- A metronome- tuner
- A full-length mirror for home practice
- A music stand
- Instrument cleaning fluid (not furniture polish such as Pledge or Old English)

NOTE: If you are having difficulty obtaining these materials or paying for the orchestra fees, please talk to the director.

SCHOOL-OWNED INSTRUMENTS

A limited number of instruments owned by the district are assigned to each school. Depending on availability, school instruments will be loaned to selected students. While a student's inability to purchase his or her own instrument is a consideration that the teacher makes in making the decision to loan out a school instrument, other factors (e.g. a student qualifies for solo and ensemble competition but owns a low quality instrument) are also considered.

Students who are loaned district instruments must be aware of and agree to the following instrument loan conditions:

Policy

- The instrument loaned to the student remains the rightful property of the district. It must be surrendered at the end of the school year on the deadline set by the orchestra director. If the instrument is not returned on the posted deadline, the director will file for a stolen item report through the NISD Police.
- Each district-owned instrument is marked by a tag that contains the instrument's inventory number. By no means must this tag be removed.
- A NON-REFUNDABLE instrument maintenance fee of \$30.00 will be collected by the director at the beginning of the school year.
- Instruments will NOT be released until the student submits the signed school instrument loan agreement AND maintenance fee to the director. This maintenance fee and loan agreement must be submitted on or before the posted deadline.
- Parents must contact the director and submit a letter of explanation if there are any circumstances that prevent payment of the maintenance fee by the posted deadline. This is required before payment arrangements can be made.
- The \$30.00 instrument maintenance fee will cover any repairs needed during the school year due to normal wear and tear and routine maintenance. This fee will NOT cover repairs for instruments that were damaged due to misuse or carelessness. The fee will NOT cover replacement of individual strings.
- Damages sustained by the instrument due to carelessness or misuse will be repaired at the student's expense through a district-approved instrument repair shop.
- NEVER attempt to make home repairs on district-owned instruments. Minor repairs such as string replacement will be done by the orchestra director. Major repairs will be entrusted to district-approved instrument repair technicians.
- Students may take home their instruments on the condition that proper care and maintenance guidelines set by the director will be observed while the instruments are in their possession.
- Students must clean their instrument and loosen the bow after each use. The instrument must also be secured in its case when not in use.
- Combination locks will be provided to each student who uses a school instrument. The student is required to keep this lock secured whenever the instrument is stored in the school locker. School-issued combination locks will be replaced at the student's expense if they are lost or damaged.
- Students are obligated to immediately report any loss or damage—major or minor—to the instrument.
- A loaned instrument may be recalled from the student if it is determined that loss or damage to the instrument was caused by misuse or carelessness.
- The director has the right to refuse to loan a school instrument to a student who has damaged an instrument in the past or has outstanding instrument fees.

REQUIRED CONCERT ATTIRE

Policy

- Gentlemen with hair below the collar must have their hair pulled in a ponytail or combed neatly away from the face.
- Only black hair ornaments of simple design will be allowed during the performance.
- Do not wear cologne or perfume. Please be considerate of classmates who may have allergies.
- Students who are not dressed in the appropriate concert attire will not be allowed to join the performance. No exceptions!



DIRECTOR-APPOINTED POSITIONS

Section Leaders

While technical ability and good musicianship—as determined by performance during a section leader audition—is a major consideration when the director appoints section leaders, the director will also assess a student’s orchestra playing experience and leadership abilities. Students who are interested in applying for this position must refer to instructions on page 6 of this handbook.

Section leaders are responsible for the following:

- Copy bowings from the conductor’s score if not already marked in their parts.
- Ensure that all their section members have copied the CORRECT bowings, fingerings, and other important markings in their individual parts.
- Assist the director in organizing and running sectional rehearsals
- Serve as a liaison between the director and their respective sections
- Help section members succeed by offering help and guidance
- Model good conduct and responsible behavior to the members of their section
- The director has the right to remove a student from his or her position if the student continues to disregard the abovementioned duties and expectations.

Librarian and the Assistant Librarian

Each orchestra class will have a librarian and an assistant librarian. These positions are filled by volunteers and no application is needed.

The librarian is responsible for the following:

- Make emergency copies of material needed for the class
- Assist the teacher in making home practice copies for students
- When needed, distribute music and books at the beginning of a rehearsal
- Inspect school music folders to see whether any parts are missing or damaged and report findings to the teacher.
- Make sure that the conductor’s scores are complete, in the correct order of performance, and placed on the director’s stand before the concert venue is opened to the public

The assistant librarian is responsible for the following:

- Assist the librarian with his or her duties
- When needed, collect music and books at the end of a rehearsal or performance
- Collect and destroy home practice copies at the end of each concert season
- Perform the librarian’s duties in the event of his or her absence

Monitors and Student Teaching Assistants

Additional student leaders will be assigned to assist the director in the performance of daily classroom tasks. These positions will be filled by volunteers, and no application is needed.

Student teaching assistants will assist the director in carrying out teaching duties. He or she will run the class in the director’s absence. Students who are chosen to fill this position must show promise for a future career in music education.



DIRECTOR-APPOINTED POSITIONS

Students who are interested in these positions must submit an Officer Application Form to the director.

Historian

The historian is responsible for the following duties:

- Documenting orchestra events through photographs and videos
- Creating an orchestra scrapbook and concert slideshows

Stage Manager and Assistant Stage Managers

There will be one stage manager for the entire orchestra. Each class period will have one stage manager.

The stage manager is responsible for the following:

- Prepare a venue for a rehearsal or performance
- Assemble a reliable stage crew
- Read and understand set-up charts; direct stage crew in setting up the stage or rehearsal space as indicated on the charts
- Assist the director in planning and executing quick and smooth set-up changes
- Assist the director in rehearsing stage movement and set-up changes in preparation for a performance
- Supervise stage crew during set-up strikes
- Account for school-owned equipment and insure that equipment is stored properly after the performance

The assistant stage managers are responsible for the following:

- Distribute uniforms at specified times before each concert; check in uniforms after each concert; and keep a log of uniforms that have been checked out or returned to storage
- Assist the director preparing uniforms for dry cleaning and accounting for them after they have been returned from dry cleaning
- Run emergency errands whenever necessary
- Ensure that the orchestra room and other areas that have been used as green rooms are cleaned up after a performance
- Ensure that the orchestra room is set-up properly for class
- Assist the stage manager in performing his or her duties



The director has the authority to remove any student leader who is not fulfilling his or her responsibilities.

STUDENT-ELECTED POSITIONS

A student who wishes to run for a position must fill out an Officer Application Form. Students whose applications are approved will be allowed to run for office. Students who are elected into office may form a staff to aid them in carrying their duties. The following officers will be elected by orchestra students and their duties will be as follows:

President

- Facilitate officer meetings
- Organize and coordinate social events with the director, classmates, and parent volunteers
- Represent the orchestra in school-wide club/electives meetings
- Organize and dispatch "Happy Birthday Crews" (small ensembles that serenade teachers on their birthdays)
- Organize leadership camp for all orchestra officers and section leaders

Vice President

- Publicize orchestra concerts and events
- Contribute articles about the orchestra to the Fine Arts Department newsletter
- Head the annual awards banquet awards committee
- Assist the president in organizing leadership camp for all orchestra officers and section leaders; plan activities for leadership camp
- Assist the president in his or her duties whenever necessary and represent the orchestra in school-wide club/electives meetings in the absence of the president.

Secretary/Treasurer

- Record minutes of orchestra meeting
- Assist the director in organizing student help for fundraising events
- Assist the director in counting money collected during fundraising events
- Represent the orchestra in school-wide club/electives meetings if both the president and vice president are unavailable
- Assist the president in organizing leadership camps by creating PowerPoint presentations





Class Representatives

- Represent their respective orchestras during officer meetings
- Act as a liaison between his or her classmates and the director and orchestra officers
- Aid the concertmaster in ensuring that the class is in order
- Keep track of their classmates' birthdays and plan simple ways to make students in their respective orchestras feel special on their birthday.

All officers and section leaders are expected to perform their duties to the best of their ability and uphold a high standard of behavior and citizenship. Students who fail to rise to these expectations will be stripped of their positions.

MENTORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Students who are considering careers in music education and music performance will be given many opportunities to better prepare themselves for college and their future profession.

GENERAL PAYMENT AND FUNDRAISING

Policy

- Financial transactions may be paid with cash, personal checks, cashier's checks, or money orders.
- Students and parents will be charged \$25.00 for returned checks.
- The director will not accept checks from individuals who have

previously written returned checks.

- Parents must contact the director and submit a letter of explanation if there are any circumstances that prevent payment of fees by the deadline. Requests for extensions may not always be approved.
- Students who are unable to pay orchestra fees in full are encouraged to submit a Fee Installment Request signed by their parent. Requests for paying fees on installment may not always be approved.
- Receipts will be provided for all financial transactions except fundraising activities.
- The director will keep a log of fundraising items checked out and money turned in.
- Students will be financially responsible for fundraising items that they check out.
- Students are responsible for turning in the cash equivalent of fundraising items that cannot be returned after they have been checked out (such as food and other perishables).
- Students who do not turn in orchestra fees and fundraising money will be reported to school administrators at the end of the school year.

ORCHESTRA TRIP ACCOUNT

Policy

- Orchestra trip fees may be paid with personal funds, profits earned during trip fundraisers, or a combination of both.
- Profits from certain trip fundraisers will go into the general fund and will be divided equally among trip participants
- Students must participate in a minimum of 2 fundraisers and satisfy the quota for each fundraiser to use these profits towards their trip account.
- Orchestra trip fees may be paid in installments. The director will set deadlines for each installment. These deadlines must be strictly followed.
- Money raised during trip fundraisers may only be used towards the student's trip account for the current school year and not towards the payment of other orchestra fees.
- Students participating in trip fundraising events must continue to make payments on or before the due dates until the entire balance is paid in full.
- Should a student withdraw or become ineligible for the trip, the profits earned from the trip fundraiser will automatically go into the general fund. These funds will not be disbursed to the student nor will it go towards next school year's trip account.
- Any personal funds put towards the trip fee will be refunded in accordance to the trip organizer's cancellation and refund policies. All requests for refunds must be submitted in writing to the orchestra director no less than seven days before the dates on the refund schedule designated by the trip organizer.

ORCHESTRA TRIP ACCOUNT POLICIES

Policy

- Failure to pay the full amount by the deadline will disqualify a student from the trip.
- A trip will be canceled if the director does not receive a sufficient number of payments by the due date.

FRIENDS OF THE ORCHESTRA

Although our orchestra does not have a formal booster organization, fundraising activities have been made possible by our parent support group, the Friends of the Orchestra. A planning meeting is held at the end of each school year to discuss next school year's fundraising activities. Periodical meetings are also held during the school year to ensure that each fundraising activity is set up for success.

The Friends of the Orchestra also help the director and officers organize events for the orchestra students, as social events and fun activities are just as big a part of the orchestra program as musical performances.

If you would like to volunteer to be part of this parent support group, please contact the director. Your help will certainly be appreciated.



