

WEST BRIAR MIDDLE SCHOOL ORCHESTRA HANDBOOK



A Guide for Orchestra Students and their Parents

2009-2010

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WELCOME, Orchestra Family!

At WBMS, our orchestra classes make up one big
“Orchestra Family.”

Q: How are we a family?

A: We respect each other’s achievements. Give props when they are due!

“That is so awesome that you made Region Orchestra! I know how hard you worked on the audition music.”

A: We support each other’s hard work.

“You must have practiced vibrato this summer! It sounds good. I’m working on mine, and maybe you can give me some tips...”

A: We stand up for each other. If someone disrespects someone else, let them know.

“You would feel badly if someone said that to you. Show some love!”

“We’re a team here. We’ll only be good if we stick together.”

“Treat others like you want to be treated.”

A: We recognize when someone is giving their best effort.

“Great job!”

“That section of the music is so tricky. You almost have it down. I bet you’ll get it with a little more practice.”

A: We help each other stay on task and succeed.

“Hey, we better hurry and unpack. One minute until class starts!”

“Don’t forget your music folder and pencil for that daily grade!”



COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

Beginning Orchestra:

This orchestra is the entry level orchestra at West Briar. The orchestra meets during 7th period. Students will learn how to read music and rhythms, as well as string instrument position, posture, bow movement, and technique. Performances and any after-school rehearsals are mandatory.

Intermediate Orchestra:

This is the middle level of orchestra at West Briar. The orchestra meets during 6th period, and may have additional rehearsals after school. Students will continue to work on rhythm, shifting, bow management and technique, as well as continuing with music theory and scales. Participation in private lessons and Region Orchestra are encouraged. Performances and any after-school rehearsals are mandatory.

Advanced Orchestra:

This is the premiere level of orchestra at West Briar. The orchestra meets during 5th period, and may have additional rehearsals or sectionals after school. Students will work on more advanced techniques, rhythms, shifting, and bow management. Students are highly encouraged to participate in private lessons and Region Orchestra. Performances, solo/ensemble contest, UIL Concert & Sight Reading Contest, and any after-school rehearsals are mandatory.

Students will only be excused from the above events for the following reasons:

1. Personal or Family Illness
2. Death in the Family
3. Religious Holiday
4. Director Approved Absence

REQUIRED SUPPLIES

1. Shoulder Rest (violins and violas only)
2. Rock Stop (cellos and basses only)
3. Sharpened pencil
4. Rosin
5. Wire Music Stand (for use at home)
6. Cleaning Cloth (a washcloth or bandana will do!)
7. Pitch Pipe or Electronic Tuner (for use at home)

Many of these instrument supplies can be purchased through your child's instrument rental company. Simply call them and tell them what you need, and they will have it sent to the school.

A note about shoulder rests: All violinists and violists are REQUIRED to have a shoulder rest. It is part of their daily grade. The shoulder rest is essential to your child's success. It allows them to be comfortable holding their violin or viola, and without it, many posture and position problems will occur. There are many styles of shoulder rests available. It is our recommendation that you look for models that have folding legs. This makes it easier for your child to put in their case. Some suggestions are:

Kun Collapsible Shoulder Rest
Artino Folding Shoulder Rest
Viva Shoulder Rest with Folding Legs
Zaret Shoulder Rest (sponge)

Remember to specify your child's instrument size when ordering a shoulder rest!

REPAIRS



If you are RENTING an instrument, repairs are very simple to take care of. Most rental plans come with an insurance policy. If your child breaks a string, needs their bow re-haired, or sits on their instrument (yes, it happens!), it generally costs you NOTHING to have these things taken care of. It is then YOUR responsibility to call the rental company and let them know they need to come pick up the instrument from the school.

If you OWN the instrument, then it is up to you to find a local company that will take care of the repair, at YOUR cost.

School Instrument & Equipment Policy

Cellists and Bassists will be provided with a school instrument to use during class. Students are expected to bring their home instruments for certain events such as concerts. We will remind them as these events occur.

BASS AND CELLO PLAYERS: At the beginning of the year, each student will list any visible damage to his instrument (nicks and scratches, etc.) At the end of the year, student and teacher will inspect the instrument and again list any visible damage. Students will be responsible for paying to repair any damage reasonably beyond normal wear and tear due to carelessness or defacement.

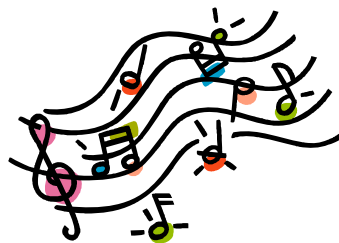
ALL STUDENTS: The school instruments and equipment are extremely delicate and must be treated with the utmost care and respect. Each student will be solely responsible for the care of his instrument and bow, including packing it up safely, handling it carefully, and wiping off rosin. Any damage to school instruments or equipment by your child will result in YOU being billed for the cost of repairs. If at any time a student's school-owned instrument needs maintenance, the student is to notify a director immediately. Parents should not make repairs themselves or have repairs done by music stores without director approval.

The cost of checking out a school instrument is \$100 per school year, or \$10/month for ten months. This covers maintenance and upkeep of the instruments. Fees may be paid in full or in installments at the preference of the parent.

CLASS MATERIALS

These must be in class EVERY day as part of your grade.

1. Black Orchestra Binder (see below)
2. Instrument & Bow
3. Shoulder Rest/Rock Stop
4. Rosin



What goes in my Orchestra Binder?

1. Pencil bag with pencil and highlighter.
Pens are NEVER to be used to mark music, even photocopied music. We often change our musical decisions and thus our markings, and ink destroys the music for future use. We will do regular pencil checks to make sure pencils are being used. Students who mark on music with pens, draw/write on music in a distracting way, or deface music by tearing it will be expected to pay for its replacement.
2. One photocopy of each piece we are playing. In the case that sheet music is lost, additional copies will be provided at a replacement charge of \$.25 per page. This is to encourage student responsibility and help cut down on excessive costs to our orchestra.
3. Beginners—All For Strings Vol. 1
4. A copy of the Orchestra Handbook

PRACTICE

To ensure that you are practicing, we will have play tests every Friday. You will be required to perform in front of the teacher and class. The highest grade you can receive is 10 points. Points will be deducted for incorrect notes and rhythms, poor posture, and other improper techniques.

Do I take my instrument home every day?

YES!!!! Even if you are not sure you will have time to practice, take your instrument home.

ORCHESTRA ROOM PROCEDURES & EXPECTATIONS

These rules state the expectations of students in the orchestra room:

1. Be in your seat with music and instrument out 2 minutes after the bell.
2. No talking while teacher is on the podium.
3. Raise your hand if you have a question, and wait to be called on.
4. Stay in your seat unless you have permission to get out of it.
5. No food, drinks, or gum in the orchestra room at any time.
6. Stay out of the orchestra office, unless you are given permission.
7. Use only YOUR instrument or supplies.
8. Put away your belongings at the end of class.
9. Respect other people's belongings.
10. Respect your director.

When you enter the orchestra room for class, follow this routine:

- Take your instrument to your seat and unpack. Make sure to rosin your bow if needed. NO ROSINING once class starts!
- Leave your backpack under your seat, and put your closed case next to your chair.
- Get in your seat, and warm up on the assigned music.
- Watch for the signal.
- No talking while tuning, as it interferes with the tuning pitch.

At ALL times, only orchestra students are allowed in the orchestra room for the safety of your property and our equipment. Please ask friends to wait at the doorway.

Before School:

- Before school, you may come to the orchestra room to practice or work on homework.
- Drop off your instrument between 8:30-8:40 am. Mr. Hughes, the percussion teacher, will have the room open. Once the tardy bell has rung, DO NOT interrupt his class, leave your instrument outside the door.

Tutoring: Please sign up with Ms. Chandler if you are in need of individual tutoring.

Phone Use:

Students may NOT use the orchestra office phone without permission.

CONSEQUENCES

As mature young ladies and men, you have the power to make your own decisions. Good choices work toward making our orchestra successful and rewarding. Wrong choices disrespect others and bring our groups down. Show pride in your group by making wise choices. If you make a wrong choice that interferes with others' learning, you must accept the consequences.

BEHAVIOR:

Consequences will be as follows:

Warning
Teacher/Student Discussion
Parent Phone Call
Warning
Office Referral and Parent/Teacher Conference
Office Referral
Removal from Orchestra

SUPPLIES:

If a student forgets to bring their instrument to class, they will NOT be allowed to use a school instrument. The student will receive a "zero" for the daily grade.

ELIGIBILITY:

Students who participate in orchestra will be expected to maintain passing grades in all subjects. This is extremely important to our ensemble. Activities such as UIL contest and competitions at amusement parks are considered extra-curricular. A student cannot participate unless he or she has passed all classes. These are referred to as "NO PASS NO PLAY" events. Official UIL eligibility rules can be found at http://www.uil.utexas.edu/policy/side_by_side.html. In general, a student must be passing all classes with a 70 or above in order to participate in extra-curricular activities.

"A student who receives, at the end of any grading period (after the first six weeks of the school year), a grade below 70 in any class (other than an identified class eligible for exemption) or a student with disabilities who fails to meet the standards in the Individual Education Plan (IEP) may not participate in extracurricular activities for three school weeks. An ineligible student may practice or rehearse, however. The student regains eligibility after the seven calendar day waiting period has ended following a grading period or the three school week evaluation period when the principal and teachers determine that he or she has earned a passing grade (70 or above) in all classes, other than those that are exempted."

Excerpt from TEA/UIL Side-by-Side

GRADING

Orchestra grades are distributed as follows:

70% = Major Grades (100 points each)

- concerts, weekly play tests, written evaluations, other written assignments

30% = Minor Grades (25 points per day)

- daily rehearsals

Each week will consist of a play test and four daily rehearsal grades. Concerts and evaluations are major grades, but occur less frequently than play tests.

PERFORMANCE DRESS

Our professional appearance reflects the pride we have in our performance. Sloppy dress distracts from a good performance. Students will be expected to follow Concert Dress guidelines strictly this year. Tuxedo shirts and bowties are included in the Intermediate and Advanced Orchestra fees. If your student already owns the formal uniform, \$17 will be deducted from their Orchestra Fee. Shirts and bow ties will be purchased from Al's Formal Wear. For all onstage formal concert performances, please dress as follows:

INTERMEDIATE and ADVANCED ORCHESTRAS

Men:

White Tuxedo Shirt
Black Dress Pants
Black Bow Tie
Black Dress Shoes (no sneakers)
Black Socks



Women:

White Tuxedo Shirt
Black Dress Pants or Long Skirt
Black Bow Tie
Black Dress Shoes (no flip-flops, no casual sandals)
Black Stockings or Hosiery

BEGINNING ORCHESTRA

Orchestra t-shirt
Khaki colored pants (no shorts)
Close-toed Shoes (no flip-flops)

REMEMBER: Appropriate concert dress is part of your child's grade! If they do not follow uniform requirements for concerts, they will NOT be allowed to perform at these events, and it will severely affect their grade.



CONCERT POLICY

The success of our orchestra depends on ALL students attending each and every performance! By enrolling in orchestra, students and their parents are committing to attending all orchestra concerts during the year. Each concert performance is worth 30 points. However, we do understand that sometimes in life, things happen that make it impossible for a student to attend a concert. Certain types of absences can be made up.

Students may make up a missed concert if:

1. The absence is due to the student's own illness, a death in the family, or a religious holiday. Due to the infrequency of our concerts, sporting events are NEVER considered excused conflicts (except in the rare case of a championship game or the equivalent).
2. The absence was cleared 2 weeks ahead by the director. Please have a parent/guardian signed note turned in to Ms. Chandler at least 2 weeks ahead of time. Leaving a voicemail the night before the concert is not considered excused.

Concert Make-Up:

For all absences, you must perform the entire concert program in front of the teacher and class in order to make up your grade. Unexcused absences will affect the performance grade, and the highest grade you may receive is a 90.

Calendar of Events:

September

3	Beginning Orchestra Instrument Fair	6:00-8:00 Cafeteria
7	No School	
10	<i>Orchestra Parent Meeting (mandatory)</i>	<i>7:00 pm Orchestra</i>
15	Open House	6:30 WBMS
18	MS Region Orchestra Entry Deadline	
28	No School	

October

10	MS Region Orchestra Audition	8:30am Cinco Ranch JH
13	<i>WBMS Concert</i>	<i>7:00 pm Auditorium</i>
27	Renaissance Festival (Advanced Only)	TBA

November

13	Region Orchestra Sectionals	6-9:30 pm TBA
19	Region Orchestra Clinic	5-8 pm Morton Ranch HS
21	Region Orchestra Clinic and Concert	8:30 am Morton Ranch
16-30	Cookie Dough Fundraiser—Music Department	
18	Music Picture Day—bring full uniform	during class
25-27	No School	

December

8	<i>WBMS Concert</i>	<i>7:00 pm Auditorium</i>
17	Cookie Dough arrives	4:00 pm Auditorium
21-31	No School	

January

1	No School	
4	No School—Teacher Prep Day	
18	No School	
23	<i>MS Solo/Ensemble Contest</i>	<i>TBA WBMS</i>
26	WBMS Faculty Recital	7:00 pm Auditorium

February

10-13	TMEA Convention	
15	No School	
26	<i>Beginning Strings Festival (Beginners Only)</i>	<i>7:00 pm Auditorium</i>

March

11	UIL Concert & Sight-reading entry deadline	
12	Elementary School tour (Advanced Only)	TBA
15-19	No School	
26	WBMS Music Party	6:00-8:00 pm WBMS

April

2	No School	
6	<i>Pre-UIL Concert (Intermediate and Advanced Only)</i>	<i>7:00 pm Auditorium</i>
21/22	UIL MS Concert & Sight-reading Contest (Advanced Only)	TBA Katy HS
22	Spring Trip Parent meeting	6:30-7 pm Choir Rm

May

8	7 th & 8 th grade Spring Music Trip	TBA
10	<i>Clinic with Mary Alice Rich (Intermediate and Advanced Only)</i>	<i>4:30-5:30 Band Rm</i>
11	<i>WBMS/WBE Concert (all)</i>	<i>7:00 pm Auditorium</i>
14	WBMS Music Banquet	7:00 pm Cafeteria
22	6 th grade Spring Music Trip	TBA
27	Last Day of School	

Please be aware that dates are subject to change

HANDBOOK SIGNATURE FORM

It is imperative that both the student and the parent/guardian read the information in this handbook and sign below. Keep your handbooks for your files and return only this portion to your director. Another copy of the handbook will be given to your child to be kept in their orchestra binder at all times.

I have read and understand all sections outlined in the WBMS ORCHESTRA HANDBOOK, and agree to abide by the rules set forth. I have also received a copy of the Calendar of Events, and understand my commitment to them.

Student's Name: _____

Student's Signature: _____

Parent's Name: _____

Parent's Signature: _____

STUDENT INFORMATION FORM

Student's Last Name: _____

Student's First Name: _____

Grade: _____

Instrument: _____

Student's Home Phone: _____

Student's Home Address: _____

Mother's Information:

Name: _____

Home Phone: _____

Work Phone: _____

Cell Phone: _____

Email: _____

Father's Information:

Name: _____

Home Phone: _____

Work Phone: _____

Cell Phone: _____

Email: _____

Parents, we need volunteers to help out with concerts, competitions, and other events. Your help will be much appreciated! If you are interested in volunteering, please indicate so below:

Are you interested in volunteering? YES / NO

What days and times are best for you? _____

In what ways would you like to serve the WBMS Orchestra?

_____ Help at concerts

_____ Chaperone at field trips

_____ Chaperone at UIL competition

_____ Help with fundraisers

_____ Other, please specify _____

**West Briar Middle School Orchestra
Instrument Loan & Inventory Tracking Form**

School Year: 2009-2010

Student's Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Instrument: _____ Model: _____ Serial No. _____

Accessories (Case) _____ Bow _____ Other _____

The above-named student and I have evaluated the condition of this instrument and have found the following defects:

You or your child will NOT be required to assume financial responsibility for any of the defects mentioned above.

Director's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Student's Signature: _____

Parent's Signature: _____