

# FORD MIDDLE SCHOOL ORCHESTRA HANDBOOK 2008-2009

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Welcome to the Ford Middle School Orchestra program. The purpose of this handbook is to inform students and parents about the activities, policies and regulations of the Ford Middle School Orchestra program. Please visit the Allen orchestra website at [www.allenorchestra.org](http://www.allenorchestra.org) for additional information.

All students in orchestra grades 7 through 12 will use the CHARMS system on-line at [www.charmsoffice.com](http://www.charmsoffice.com).

CHARMS is a time saving, information and communication tool used to help our orchestra programs succeed. Please go to the website. Locate the "Parent/Student Login" section of the web page. The parent/student login is fordmsorch Next, enter at the "Student ID/Password" prompt your child's Allen ISD student ID. (After logging in, you may create your own unique password.) Here you can update the student information. (This information is safe and NEVER shared with any 3<sup>rd</sup> party.) It is used to send emails with orchestra news, upcoming events, etc. Handouts and forms will be located in the CHARMS account. Also, students can listen to songs that we are playing in class.

## MATERIALS

Please bring the following materials to class every day.

- \* instrument and bow in good repair
- \* rosin
- \* cleaning cloth
- \* shoulder rest for violin/viola
- \* rock stop for cello/bass (needed only for concerts and contests)
- \* identification tag on handle of instrument case
- \* clipped fingernails on the left hand\*
- \* sharpened pencil
- \* black 3-ring binder (1") with 5 dividers\*\*
- \* orchestra music
- \* **Concert Orchestra** text  
Essential Elements 2000 Book 1 (for your instrument)

**Label all instruments, accessories and materials with your name and school.**

\*Left hand fingernails must be kept short enough for students to use the tips of their fingers when holding down the string on the fingerboard. For most people, this means that the fingernails should not extend beyond the tip of the finger. Artificial or acrylic fingernails should not be worn unless they meet this description.

\*\*All sheet music will be kept in the binder. Label the dividers as follows: **TEKS, Warm-Ups, Music, Daily Work/Tests, and Practice Records.**

Parents are expected to assist students in keeping the instrument maintained and in good repair. When repairs are necessary, it is expected that students will have the repair work done as quickly as possible.

Failure to bring your instrument, music or orchestra binder and failure to have any of the materials listed above will prevent you from participating fully in class. This will result in points being deducted from your participation grade.

**Lockers & Locks: All students will be assigned a combination lock and locker for their instrument. Students are responsible for the school lock. Replacement cost is \$5 for lost or damaged locks.** Always put your instrument in your **LOCKED** locker when it is not in use.

**Tuners & Microphones: All students will be assigned a tuner and microphone for their instrument. Students are responsible for them. Replacement cost is \$25 for lost or damaged tuners/mics.** Always put your tuner and microphone in your **LOCKED** locker when it is not in use.

Every student is responsible for putting away all materials in their proper place at the end of class. Do not leave any music, binders, or accessories on your stand or points may be deducted from your participation grade. Materials that are borrowed for the day from the director need to be returned, or your borrowing privileges will be suspended. All students are responsible for leaving the orchestra room looking neat and organized for the next class.

### **FORD MS CLASSROOM PROCEDURES AS THEY APPLY IN ORCHESTRA**

1. Being prepared means to be seated with all materials within two minutes after the bell rings.
2. Staying on task means to start and stop playing as the director tells or conducts you. Making extra sounds, talking or practicing during the rehearsal is disruptive and is not staying on task. Avoid comments, questions and conversations that are off the subject. Stay focused on the rehearsal objectives.
3. Being respectful means to compliment others, encourage and support hard work and not to tease or laugh at anyone or their playing. Use proper and appropriate grammar.
4. Following directions means to cooperate and comply with what Mrs. Curry or any other director or guest clinician asks you to do.

5. Keeping hands, feet and objects to self helps you and the rest of the orchestra to stay focused on the rehearsal. Your parents and the school district have provided us with many valuable instruments and pieces of equipment. It is very important that you take good care of all the instruments and equipment. **Do not touch, take, borrow or use anyone else's instrument, music or accessories.**

## **DISCIPLINE MANAGEMENT PLAN**

### Consequences for Negative Choices

1. Verbal Redirection
2. Teacher/Student Conference
3. Teacher-held 30 minute detention with parent notification by phone or email
4. 1 hour Tu/Wed/Thur after school behavior detention (3:35-4:40) with parent notification
5. Office Referral

Other possible consequences are change of seat, temporary separation from the group, or a written assignment to be completed during class.

**Gum chewing will not be allowed in orchestra classes.**

### Rewards

1. Praise
2. Stickers
3. Special privileges for individuals
4. Special privileges for the class
5. Pride in yourself and the orchestra
6. Individual success
7. Group success

## **TARDIES AND TUNING**

To avoid a tardy, be in the classroom by the time the bell rings; be in your seat with your instrument and materials ready to tune by two minutes after the bell. No talking is allowed during tuning. Proper tuning behavior is essential for accurate tuning of the orchestra.

## GRADING

- 60% Tests (Performance and Written), Projects, Concerts
- 20% Practice Record Grades, Theory/Music History Assignments
- 20% Rehearsal Focus, Class Participation

Tests – Test grades involve performance tests and written tests. Performance tests will take place during class, live or by tape. Grades will be based on tone, intonation, bowing, rhythm, posture/positions and general musicianship. Students will be graded on their individual ability.

Concerts – Because we are a performance-based organization, concerts are an important part of the grading and evaluation process. Attendance at curricular concerts will be worth at least one grade. Each concert is vital to a student's musical development. Each student is an important member of the orchestra. The absence of one performer can make a difference in the success experienced by the whole group. Make-up assignments, for excused absences from concerts, will be given and may include a written paper or research project.

Practice Records – Students must practice regularly to improve on their instruments and to achieve a continuing level of success. Practice marathons do not achieve the same positive results as practicing distributed over several days. Therefore, it is suggested that you try to divide your practice time over the entire week rather than crowd it into one or two days. Students are expected to turn in a practice record on Friday of each week. Your individual practice may include time spent practicing class assignments and private lesson assignments. Parents will need to sign the practice record to help verify that you did indeed practice the amount of time that you have recorded. You are on your honor to be truthful about the number of minutes that you write down. Academic dishonesty will result in disciplinary action. Below are the points received for the total minutes practiced in a one-week period. **Points will be deducted, according to school policy, if the practice record is late and/or not signed by the parent/guardian.**

100 minutes=100 points, 90 minutes=90 points, 50 minutes=50 points, etc.

Rehearsal Focus and Class Participation – This grade includes participation in class activities, bringing materials to class every day, starting and stopping with the director, level of focus or concentration on the rehearsal, posture, instrument position, attitude, ability to play the music at an acceptable level and attempts to improve identified weak areas.

Extra credit can be earned by:

- 1) Practicing more than 100 minutes per week
- 2) Participating in AISD MS Honor Orchestra auditions
- 3) Participating in AISD Solo/Ensemble Festival
- 4) Attending concerts and turning in the program from the concert with your name and a parent signature on the program

## PRIVATE LESSONS

All instrumental directors agree that private instruction is crucial for students who wish to maximize their potential and become competitive on their instrument. The lessons not only help with any problems a student may encounter but also supplement and enrich the music curriculum. Many private teachers in the area have studios in their home or other locations and set their own fees. Some private teachers will be available on the Ford MS campus during the school day. If you choose to take lessons at school, the lessons will be given during one half of your orchestra class once a week. The fee for the lessons at school is set by the district and is paid directly to the teacher. Please fill out and return the attached form if you would like to take lessons at school. A list of recommended private teachers can be found at [www.allenorchestra.org](http://www.allenorchestra.org).

Private lessons are strongly encouraged but are considered enrichment to the school curriculum. Students' grades will not be penalized if they choose not to take private lessons.

## CONCERT DRESS

The concert dress should be worn for all concerts, unless you are told otherwise.

**Boys** need to wear black dress slacks, a long sleeved black dress shirt, dark socks and dark shoes (preferably dress shoes).

**Girls** need to wear black dress slacks or a dressy floor length skirt, a black blouse, and dark shoes (no flip flops). Your blouse should have sleeves,  $\frac{3}{4}$  length or full length sleeves and needs to completely cover your midriff.

## T-SHIRTS

The Ford orchestra t-shirt is available for purchase for \$10. The shirt is available in adult sizes (S, M, L, XL) and youth size L. The shirt is not required, but students will be asked to wear it for several events and also just for fun! Students who do not have the orchestra t-shirt will be asked to wear a plain **black** t-shirt (no design) for those specific concerts or events when the t-shirt is required. To buy a shirt, bring cash (exact change, please) or a check made out to  **AISD**  and a completed shirt order form found in this packet. If paying by check, please include a TXDL#.

## ELIGIBILITY

Orchestra students are expected to maintain passing grades in all subjects so that they may participate in extra-curricular events. This is a state law, known as the No Pass/No Play Law. Extra-curricular events include Honor Orchestra, Solo and Ensemble Festival, UIL Concert and Sight-reading and Spring Festivals. Your grades in other subject areas impact the entire orchestra. Please make every effort to maintain passing grades in all of your classes.

## **TUTORIALS**

Tutorials will occur on Tuesday and Thursday each week from 3:35-4:30. (There are no morning tutorials because Mrs. Curry teaches at the elementary schools during that time.) Students who practice during tutorials are required to have Mrs. Curry sign their practice record.

## **CELLO AND BASS PLAYERS ONLY**

Cellists and bassists are allowed to use school instruments provided that they complete and turn in the AISD Orchestra Instrument Contract and the \$100 one-time usage fee for the school year. The form is included in this handbook, if you play cello or bass. The instruments provided by AISD are of very high quality and should be used with great care. These instruments are used at school only, and the students should have their own cello or bass that they have rented (or purchased) from the music store at home for practicing. The \$100 usage fee is used for annual maintenance and repair of the instrument. Students will be responsible for any damage that occurs to the instrument while it is in their possession. Any repairs exceeding \$100 will be the student's responsibility. Please keep in mind this is a convenience provided to you by the district for approximately \$10 a month and the cost to replace the strings alone on these instruments is well over \$100.

## **COMMITMENTS**

By being a member of the Ford MS Orchestra, you are making a commitment to a group of your peers that you will put forth your very best effort toward making this orchestra a success. This means that you will have high standards of musical excellence and be dependable, responsible, and respectful and have a positive attitude in all matters related to the Ford Orchestra.

It is also expected that you will attend all after-hours rehearsals and concerts, unless excused by the director. You will receive a test grade of 100 for attendance at the required rehearsals and concerts. Excused absences will only be granted in the case of personal illness, death in the family, or a religious holiday, and a make-up assignment will be required. A written note or a phone call from your parent is required; verbal or written excuses from students will not be accepted. Any scheduling conflicts with the 2008-2009 calendar should be reported as soon as possible. Every attempt has been made to avoid conflicts with other school events, although some conflict is inevitable and compromises may need to be reached. Hopefully, conflicts can be worked out at an early date. Rehearsals outside of the school day will be kept to a minimum. Due to the many activities of all of our students, we will rarely, if ever, have after school rehearsals. If a rehearsal is deemed necessary, Mrs. Curry will give notice well in advance of any required rehearsals.

## **COMMUNICATION**

Parent communication is welcome at any time. Please email Mrs. Curry at [valerie\\_curry@allenisd.org](mailto:valerie_curry@allenisd.org) or call the school at 972-727-0590, ext. 1512.

## **PARENT and STUDENT SIGNATURE PAGE**

Student name \_\_\_\_\_ Period \_\_\_\_\_

I have read and agree to the policies, responsibilities and commitments required of members of the Ford Middle School Orchestra. I will do my best to uphold these commitments, including passing all other classes besides orchestra and attending rehearsals and concerts outside class time.

Student signature \_\_\_\_\_

As a parent, I agree to support my child as a member of the Ford Middle School Orchestra. I have read the policies, responsibilities and commitments of orchestra members and will do my best to see that my child upholds these commitments.

Parent signature \_\_\_\_\_

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_

Parents, please place a check by any of the following volunteer opportunities that you might be interested in participating during the school year:

- \_\_\_\_\_ During school hours (fundraisers, organization, etc.)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Chaperone trips
- \_\_\_\_\_ Supervise students during concerts
- \_\_\_\_\_ Transport equipment for performances

## **Private Lesson Information**

A private teacher list is available at [www.allenisd.org](http://www.allenisd.org)

Is this student currently enrolled in private lessons?    YES    NO

If yes, what is the private teacher's name? \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, do they take lessons at the teacher's home/studio?            YES    NO

If your student is NOT currently enrolled in lessons and you would like to sign them up for lessons, please check the appropriate line below:

\_\_\_\_\_ I would be willing to drive my child to the teacher's home.

\_\_\_\_\_ I would like to enroll my child in private lessons at the school during orchestra class. (Please note that there are very few teachers that come to the campus and their schedules fill up quite quickly. It is on a first-come, first-serve basis. At the present time, we don't have any bass teachers that come to the campus.)

**Please return this sheet by Friday, August 29<sup>th</sup> if your student is interested in taking private lessons at the school during orchestra class.**