



**ALLEN ORCHESTRA**

**HANDBOOK**

**2011 – 2012**

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

# ORCHESTRA HANDBOOK

## 2011 - 2012

A handbook for the orchestras in the  
Allen Independent School District

### TEACHING STAFF AND ADMINISTRATION

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### COMMUNICATION

Please visit the Allen orchestra website at [www.allenorchestra.org](http://www.allenorchestra.org) for additional information.  
All students in orchestra grades 6 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 [www.charmsoffice.com](http://www.charmsoffice.com) Locate the "Parent/Student Login" section of the web page. The parent/student login is: Allen HS/Lowery FC: AllenHSOrch Curtis MS: CurtisMSOrch Ford MS: FordMSOrch Ereckson MS: ErecksonMSOrch. 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 3rd 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. Please use this resource and keep your information up-to-date. Charms is used district-wide by the fine arts staff in Allen ISD for communication, finances, etc...

## PURPOSE

The purposes of the **Allen ISD Orchestras** are:

- to develop an understanding and appreciation for one of the greatest artistic achievements of mankind - the full and string orchestra repertoire.
- to train students in music to a point where they may participate in the performance of these great works and to enable them to continue making music, whether as an avocation or a profession, after graduation from high school.
- to assist students in growing into responsible and successful members of society, able to produce well both individually, and as a member of a group, and possessing the essential characteristics of integrity, dependability, and loyalty.

The rules and procedures outlined in this handbook have been developed to accomplish these goals in the most efficient and productive manner, and to provide an accurate method of assessing each student's progress. It is the personal and musical progress of each student which is the ultimate goal of this organization. The success of the **Allen Orchestra Program** has traditionally been based on the concept of each student's performing his or her assigned tasks to the best of his or her ability. Each student is capable of making a contribution to the group and to grow in knowledge and appreciation.

Students will contribute to the Allen ISD Orchestra by:

- **CARING** for other students who share similar musical interests
- **RESPECTING** self and fellow musicians
- Demonstrating **RESPONSIBILITY** on and off the performance stage
- Manifesting **TRUST** by being dependable and honest
- Role modeling the standards of our musical **FAMILY** to the Allen community

## ORCHESTRA MEMBERSHIP AND ORGANIZATION

Orchestra in the Allen ISD is both a class and an activity. Instruction on a stringed instrument is available to those who maintain proper standards of conduct and fulfill their financial obligations. Students who are members of the Allen Orchestra Program will be required to participate in ALL activities of the organization, including rehearsals, sectionals, and performances. Students are encouraged to fundraise and participate in the Off-Campus Trips/Festivals/Performances.

Orchestra is open to any 6<sup>th</sup> grade student. Starting in 7<sup>th</sup> grade, students are placed in orchestra classes based on an audition the previous Spring (or scheduled by the director/parents/student), orchestra grade history, eligibility history, and director recommendation.

## STATEMENT ON STUDENT ASSESSMENT

In order to succeed in the orchestra, a student should demonstrate two things:

*A willingness to improve their musical skills*  
*A work ethic that will improve the orchestra team*

It would not be fair to assess a student's progress based solely upon playing abilities. Those born with higher natural skills would have an unfair advantage over those who really have to work hard at playing their instrument. Instead, several things can come into account, including:

- an *improvement* in overall performance skills
- being *on time* to class and rehearsals
- *success* in all academic courses – understanding that failing courses affects participation in orchestra
- *attitude* toward other students as well as the directors
- willing to *accept constructive comments*
- willingness to *help* with daily functions of the orchestra
- *a spirit that is positive* toward the image of the orchestra program
- the ability to *represent* the Allen Orchestra Program and the city of Allen in a positive manner

## TESTS AND EXAMS

Playing tests and exams, consist of material assigned by your director - usually an assigned excerpt from the repertoire of the upcoming concert or other performing material. Playing tests may affect chair placement for concerts. Occasionally, it may be necessary to give a written test and/or exam.

## GRADES

Each student will be awarded points based upon the following scale. At the end of each grading period, the number of points awarded can be divided into the number of points available to compute the average.

<b>ACTIVITY</b>	<b>AVERAGE</b>
Class Participation This grade includes daily equipment checks (instrument, pencil, binder, etc...) assignments (practice records, music/history, projects, etc...) as well as full involvement in rehearsals by the student	50%
Concerts, Quizzes, and Tests Unexcused absences from concerts or tests will require make-up work for grade	50%

## ATTENDANCE

Orchestra activities are planned so that the least amount of activities will conflict. All students are encouraged to participate in as many activities as they wish, but at the same time, orchestra members are required to participate in all orchestra events, rehearsals and performances - remembering that a **grade is given for each event.**

**IMPORTANT:** In the event of a conflict, the student has the responsibility of submitting a signed note, email, or phone call from a parent or the appropriate teacher or sponsor stating the reason for the conflict. Notes that have not been submitted prior to two weeks before the orchestra event *may not be considered*. This note does not automatically excuse an absence. Each case is considered individually and privately according to its circumstances.

All absences, whether excused or unexcused, must be made up and it is the student's responsibility to obtain the makeup assignment with their director. Only excused absences will be given full credit. Last minute excuses cause problems in scheduling and may not be excused. The only exceptions would be a student illness, death in the family, or religious holiday. Not having a ride to an orchestra function does not qualify a student for an excused absence. If this occurs, please try to get a ride from another student. As a last resort, contact your director. Please make efforts to make sure that you have reliable prearranged transportation to all activities. The attendance guidelines do not apply to social events.

## ATTENDANCE POLICY

Attendance is required at all scheduled rehearsals, sectionals, chamber music rehearsals and performances.

Examples of excused absences:

- **Death in the family**
- **Medical emergency or illness**
- **Religious holiday**

Examples of unexcused absences:

- **Family trips**
- **Jobs**
- **Personal business or entertainment**

All requests for excused absence from rehearsals, sectionals, chamber music rehearsals and performances are to be **REPORTED IN WRITING, EMAIL, OR PHONE CALL**. If an absence is anticipated, a written request for an excused absence should be submitted at least two weeks in advance. Circumstances may justify an excused absence for reasons other than those listed above. In the case of illness or family emergency, an explanatory telephone call or email prior to the rehearsal or performance is appropriate.

## ELIGIBILITY

It is very important that each student maintains passing grades in all classes in addition to orchestra. If you are having trouble passing a class, please notify your conductor. We can try to get you extra help, if not from a teacher, maybe from a fellow student. We expect each member of the Allen Orchestra to do all the work necessary to pass all his or her classes. School performances (events held at an AISD campus) are required regardless of a student's grades. UIL Contests/Extra-Curricular activities (events not held at an AISD campus and/or UIL events) are directly affected by students' eligibility. **All grades must be passing to attend contests and school orchestra trips (events outside of AISD)**

## ORCHESTRA RULES

Orchestra rules are designed to be simple and easy to follow. They are effective in keeping order during classes and rehearsals only when each member of the orchestra chooses to follow them. They are:

- When class is scheduled to begin, **be in your seat** with your instrument ready to play and with your music notebook, pencil and any other necessary equipment on your music stand. **THE SCHOOL TARDY POLICY WILL BE ADHERED TO.**
- Everyone must have **their music/binder and pencil** at their seat *every day*.
- Respect the property of other individuals. This includes instruments as well as music. **You do not have the permission to use anyone else's instrument or materials.** Please do not assume that you do.
- **No food, drink or gum is allowed in the orchestra room.**
- Be respectful to everyone in the room - **that includes when and how you talk.**

Most discipline problems can be handled in-house, such as, assignment to orchestra detention hours, for such things as eating in the orchestra room, failure to follow rules, etc... Any behavior problem can (for any reason) result in a call home and completion of the AISD Student Discipline form to their house office. **Poor behavior will not be tolerated and can affect a student's participation in orchestra.**

## PRACTICE

Individual home practice is an integral part of any musician's learning process. It is very important to our orchestra that effort is being made by each student for learning individual parts outside of the classroom. **Class meetings and rehearsals are not to be used as a practice session, but as time for working out ensemble concerns.** The Allen Orchestra Program is successful because of the quality teaching you have received in the early years of your musical education. It becomes a superior orchestra when all of its members put hard work into it. Just as in any other class, if there is a problem in the music that you cannot handle, please talk to your orchestra director.

## PRIVATE LESSONS

In a program this large, it is impossible for the directors to meet the individual needs of each student. With private lessons, participating students can have the luxury of extra help on a one-to-one basis. Each lesson from the AISD program costs \$17.00 for a half-hour of instruction. It is up to students and parents to coordinate lessons which are off-campus and not a part of instruction during the school day. Applications and further information can be obtained from your orchestra director. Lesson slots and times are honored on a first-come-first-served basis. It would be to your benefit to register early as time slots and studios fill early. **A list of Private Lesson teachers is available at: <http://www.allenorchestra.org>.**

## COMPETITIONS

All students are encouraged to participate in competitions outside the scope of the orchestra experience. The Allen Orchestras have been represented well in these types of contests, and has enjoyed the successes of individual as well as collective performances. Many students elect to participate in the AISD Chamber Festival each spring. TMEA (Texas Music Educators Association) sponsors auditions for the Region XXV and All-State Orchestras

Students do not receive extra grade points for participation in any of these activities and participation in any of these events may not interfere with any work that is required for the class. Students do receive credit in audition placements each Spring for their extra work. Students desiring extra help in preparing for these events should see your director to schedule an appointment.

## ALLEN ORCHESTRA BOOSTER CLUB

The Orchestra Booster Club has one meeting each year in the beginning of the fall semester (Registration) and a meeting in the Spring Semester (Spring Trip Meeting.). At these meetings, it will be possible for parents to volunteer for committees such as chaperones, finance, transportation, etc. More information is available at <http://www.allenorchestra.org>.

## MUSIC

All music performed by the Allen Orchestras is provided by the school district. Any music used for extra-curricular purposes is usually be provided by the student or the organization (TMEA Region & All-State Orchestra, Solo & Ensemble, etc...). Originals are the property of the Allen Orchestra Program. Students are expected to take good care of the music. Markings should be made in soft lead pencil only. Any originals are collected during the first class following a performance. Photocopied music needs to be kept in a **black three-ring binder, provided by the school**. If music is missing, it is up to the student to obtain a copy of the music from a section member – it is not the director’s responsibility! After each performance, all photocopies are destroyed.

**Each student is expected to have his or her own personal copy of the music at every class and/or rehearsal. Even when a stand partner’s copy of the music is being used, each student needs their personal copy of the music to make markings.** Do not assume that if your stand partner’s music is marked, yours is as well. Furthermore, don’t assume that you will remember them next time. **Everyone needs to mark his or her music.** From time to time, there may be an unannounced grade given for your work in marking your music.

## EQUIPMENT:

- Instrument (district provides cellos and basses for class use w/\$125 student use fee grades 7-12)
- Electronic Tuner (district provided - \$25 replacement fee for lost tuners)
- Black 1" binder – district provided (dividers provided by student)
- Pencil (**at all times**)
- Mute
- Rosin for your instrument
- Soft cloth to wipe off instrument after each use
- Shoulder pad (violin/viola) - Cello Strap or Rock Stop (cello/bass)
- clipped fingernails on the left hand\*

\*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.

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

## INSTRUMENTS

A quality school orchestra program requires quality musical instruments. By the time a student in 8<sup>th</sup> or 9<sup>th</sup> grade, they will be expected to be using what is considered a step-up quality instrument and a quality wood (Pernambuco) bow. In most cases, these items will have been purchased during or after the eighth grade year. One advantage of owning such an instrument is that, in contrast to “starter” instruments which can depreciate in value, quality string instruments actually gain value as they age. Instruments and bows should not be in a color other than a traditional “wood” finish (or carbon for bows only)

Students are responsible for your instrument’s care and maintenance. Whether you own or rent an instrument, you are responsible for purchasing replacement strings (Dominant brand or Pro Arte strings recommended.) For your convenience, music representatives from local stores can fill orders from students. To order – sign the order sheet in the AHS or Lowery Orchestra Hall foyer bulletin board. Prices are posted on the bulletin board – students will be responsible for paying for the merchandise when delivered. Payments should be made by check – directly to the music company.

With all personal and school instruments, it is strongly recommended that the instrument be insured through a parent’s homeowner’s policy or a private company. **The school district will not assume liability for maintenance, repair, or damage of personal instruments on school property.**

In addition, students may obtain inexpensive coverage on a school or privately owned instrument from the Music Agency, Inc., Arlington, Texas. Application forms for this insurance are available online at [www.musicagencyinc.com](http://www.musicagencyinc.com).

### INSTRUMENT LOAN – Cello/Bass

AISD and Allen High School owns cellos and basses that can be loaned to a student in grades 7-12 for a small charge. In order to use these, the student must pay an annual maintenance fee of \$125 per instrument, which includes insurance for the school-owned instrument.

In addition to the annual maintenance fee, it is the students’ responsibility to provide general upkeep to maintain the instrument in proper playing condition, including bow rehairing and replacement of strings due to misuse. Please complete and return the AISD Orchestra Instrument Contract if loaned an instrument from AISD – form available at <http://www.allenorchestra.org>.

### INSTRUMENT LOCKERS

**Lockers & Locks: Each student will be assigned a locker for their instrument. Students are responsible for the school issued lock. Replacement cost is \$10 for lost or damaged locks.** Always put your instrument in your **LOCKED** locker when it is not in use.

# AHS/LOWERY ORCHESTRAS

*Class Specific Information*



## UNIFORMS

For all concerts, students wear the appropriate uniform. Part of each performance grade is based upon how you wear your uniform -- neatness, alterations, cleanliness, etc. If there are any alterations needed to make your uniform look better, you may have them done provided that they are *temporary* alterations and no fabric is cut. Informal uniforms need to be purchased by the student. These are t-shirts and are available at the beginning of the school year. The cost per shirt is \$10.00. The formal uniforms are provided by the school district, **except for socks, hose and shoes**. Under no circumstances is anyone allowed to wear boots of any kind with the formal uniform.

Informal uniform:	orchestra t-shirt, blue jeans or khakis
Ladies' formal uniform:	black dress, <b>black hose and black shoes provided by student</b>
Men's' formal uniform:	black tuxedos, bow ties and cummerbunds, white tuxedo shirt, <b>black socks, black shoes provided by student</b>

## LETTER AWARDS

A jacket will be presented to senior students who have served the high school orchestra program well. Students must have participated in the orchestra program from the time of his/her enrollment in high school before his/her senior year and must participate through graduation of his/her senior year. Students will attend all performances and UIL activities. Exceptions will be granted at the discretion of the orchestra director (illness, deaths, etc.). Students not adhering to written disciplinary policies of the school and orchestra will forfeit their eligibility for the senior award jacket. Any violation of these rules during their senior year may result in the forfeiture of the jacket. The student must uphold the goals and standards of the orchestra. It is understood that withdrawal or dismissal from the orchestra prior to graduation of his/her senior year results in forfeiture of the jacket. One additional way to earn a letter jacket is to make a TMEA State Orchestra. These students will be eligible to receive a letter jacket the following year regardless of classification.

### **OUT-OF-TOWN TRIPS**

Every year, during the spring, the Allen HS Orchestra sponsors a trip to an out-of-town destination. The conductors and the leadership of the Allen HS Orchestra are committed to pursuing more of these trips each year. Details of the Spring Trip will be shared as soon as the information is available – online at <http://www.allenorchestra.org>.

- Students must meet all local and state eligibility requirements to participate in the Spring Trip
- Students who are ineligible may not travel with the orchestra
- Students must be able to satisfactorily perform the material assigned for the Spring Trip performance
- Students must have attended scheduled rehearsals
- Students must fulfill their financial & trip contract obligations to the organization

### **ADVANCED MUSIC COURSE**

**New for 2011-2012**

*AHS ONLY - open to 10<sup>th</sup> grade (4.5 credit) and 11-12 grade students (5.0 credit)*

Allen High School is pleased to announce the addition of the advanced music course for band, choir and orchestra. This course is designed to allow students the opportunity to extend their musical education in an enriched, independent curriculum for college readiness. Students must demonstrate a higher level of musical understanding and be able to perform at the highest possible level both as an individual and as a member an ensemble. Students will be expected to demonstrate a high level of critical listening, musical understanding, technical ability, knowledge of the theoretical and historical foundations of compositions and present information in a well-written academic manner. This course is designed for students with elevated performance, communication and/or cognitive skills. Due to the independent nature of this course, students who elect to pursue honors credit should be self-motivated and responsible. All assignments will be completed independently within the time-line provided by the instructor. Note that this is not a separate class, but rather an additional layer added to the classes offered above. Detailed course information, requirements and application may be found on the AISD Fine Arts website or [www.allenorchestra.org](http://www.allenorchestra.org).

# HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGMENT FORM

*Please complete this and all the following forms - All Allen ISD Orchestra Students/Parents*

**Student name** \_\_\_\_\_ **School** \_\_\_\_\_ **Period** \_\_\_\_\_

I have read and agree to the policies, responsibilities and commitments required of members of the Allen ISD Orchestra Program. 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 Allen ISD Orchestra Program. 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** \_\_\_\_\_