



ALLEN ORCHESTRA

HANDBOOK

2020 – 2021

www.allenorchestra.org

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COMMUNICATION

Please visit the Allen orchestra website at 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.

CHARMS is a time saving, information and communication tool used to help our orchestra programs succeed. Please go to 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...
<https://allenorchestra.org/charms/>

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 contribute both individually, and as a member of a group while 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. The goal of this organization is for each student to progress both as a citizen and a musician through making music with a group of their peers. 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** both 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 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 6th grade student. Starting in 7th grade, students are placed in orchestra classes based on the following criteria: an audition held in 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 greater 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 Allen ISD 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 will be performed using smartmusic in class, and may affect chair placement for concerts. [Playing Test Rubric located online.](#) 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.

ACTIVITY	AVERAGE
Class Participation This grade includes daily equipment checks (instrument, pencil, binder, etc...), assignments (practice records, music/history, projects, etc...), canvas assignments, and full involvement in ALL rehearsals by the student	50%
Concerts, Quizzes, and Tests Unexcused absences from concerts or tests will require make-up work in order to receive credit	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 guardian 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 BY A PARENT or GUARDIAN**. If an absence is anticipated, a written request for an excused absence should be submitted at least two weeks in advance. Emergency 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.**
- **Cell phones should be silenced and stored out of sight during orchestra class.**
- Be respectful to everyone in the room - **that includes when and how you talk.**
- The possession and/or use of alcohol, tobacco, e-cigs, and illegal drugs are expressly forbidden and will not be tolerated. Any infraction, on or off campus, will result in dismissal from the program.

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 submission of the AISD Student Discipline Form to their house office. **Poor behavior will not be tolerated and can affect a student's participation grade and/or placement in orchestra.** Any student removed from the Orchestra program will not be allowed back in for a minimum of a calendar year from the date of removal from the program. Students who have been removed retain no rights to awards, recognitions, etc., which are received after dismissal, although they may have accrued over the duration of the school term. They lose all privileges associated with the Orchestra program, including attending Orchestra program only events, the end of year banquet (even as a guest), and using Orchestra facilities.

PRACTICE

Individual home practice is an integral part of any musician's learning process, and is considered your homework in orchestra. 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. The purpose of a rehearsal is to learn everyone else's part; never your own! Your own preparation is your welcoming gift to your colleagues. Just as in any other class, if there is a problem in the music that you cannot handle, please talk to your orchestra director about extra help.

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 \$20.00 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/private-lessons/>

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 who are not enrolled in Allen High School Advanced Music do not receive extra grade points for participation in any of these activities - 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/boosters/>

MUSIC

All music performed by the Allen Orchestras is provided by the school district. Any music used for extra-curricular purposes is usually 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 provides a tuner in class. Directors recommend all students have a personal tuner)
- 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 rest (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 personal instruments, accessories and materials with your name and school (name tags on cases)

INSTRUMENTS

A quality school orchestra program requires quality musical instruments. By the time a student in 8th or 9th 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 D’Addario Pro Arte strings recommended.)

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 Anderson Musical Instrument Insurance Solutions. Application forms for this insurance are available online at <http://www.anderson-group.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 rehair 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/store>

INSTRUMENT LOCKERS

Lockers & Locks: Each 7th – 12th grade 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. Locker assignments are posted in Charms: <https://allenorchestra.org/charms/>

STUDENT TRAVEL

Student travel with an AISD Orchestra is a privilege; you are representing not only the Orchestra program but Allen ISD when you travel as a group. Please follow the guidelines for travel below. Choosing not to comply with the following will result in a discipline referral at the student’s campus and possible removal from the Orchestra program.

- Your behavior in class determines your ability to participate in an Orchestra trip. Chronic behavior problems in class will result in the student to lose chance to travel with the Orchestra.
- Students who choose to participate in illegal activity (drugs, alcohol, shoplifting, vandalism) will be asked dismissed from the trip and must be picked up by a parent. These illegal activities could lead to possible arrest by the local police.
- Be respectful of all parents & teachers on the trip. When visiting a public venue, show kindness and respect to all employees of the business.