

# **LOVEJOY ISD ORCHESTRA HANDBOOK**

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# WELCOME TO THE LOVEJOY ISD ORCHESTRA PROGRAM

Dear Orchestra Students and Parents,

Instrumental music is an exciting activity in which the students' opportunity for participation increases as each year passes. Orchestra students learn to express themselves in a unique manner different from many other subjects and activities. One of the most important concepts learned is how to achieve as a group and work for common goals.

Orchestra students are always in the public eye. Therefore, responsibility and discipline are stressed so that students will become excellent representatives of themselves, their school and their community.

Most importantly—orchestra is **FUN!** Many students will make lifetime friends and memories through their association with the school orchestra program.

The purpose of this handbook is to introduce you to the Lovejoy ISD Orchestra Program. Please feel free to ask questions. We look forward to working with you!

Sincerely,

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## Philosophy and Program Goals

The Lovejoy ISD Orchestra exists in a number of capacities within the overall school environment. As a curricular course in the State of Texas, orchestra is an elective class with defined instructional objectives for the individual student. As a campus organization, the orchestra enhances the aesthetic quality of life for all students and promotes school spirit and pride.

In serving these multiple roles, there are several key goals for student success. In the Lovejoy ISD orchestra, students should:

- Perform proficiently on their instrument individually and as member of an ensemble.
- Develop an understanding of our musical heritage and recognize the importance of music in our culture.
- Develop self-confidence and self-discipline by working as a team member.
- Build citizenship traits through mutually respectful relationships with teachers and peers.
- Build a framework for the lifelong appreciation of music.

## COMMUNICATION

If you have any questions concerning the orchestra program, please consult the directors first. Problems are often a result of miscommunication and can sometimes be resolved quickly through a telephone call. Please make every effort to attend all concerts-they are mandatory-and encourage your child to practice regularly. **PARENTAL SUPPORT IS VITAL TO THE SUCCESS OF ANY PROGRAM!**

## COMMITMENT

Orchestra is considered to be a full year course not a one-semester course. Due to yearly staffing allocations and scheduling limitations, students are making a commitment to the students of the organization to be involved in orchestra for the entire school year.

## **ORGANIZATION**

The Lovejoy Orchestra Program is divided into the following groups:

### **BEGINNER ORCHESTRA - SLOAN CREEK INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL**

- No previous music background required.
- Divided into classes of like instruments.
- Performs four concerts during the school year.

### **CONCERT ORCHESTRA - WILLOW SPRINGS MIDDLE SCHOOL**

- Open to students with at least one year of playing experience.
- Performs at school concerts, football games, and invitational festivals at the discretion of the directors.

### **PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA - WILLOW SPRINGS MIDDLE SCHOOL**

- Open to students with at least one year of playing experience.
- Performs at school concerts, football games, and invitational festivals at the discretion of the directors.

### **CHAMBER ORCHESTRA - WILLOW SPRINGS MIDDLE SCHOOL**

- Admission is by audition with strict adherence to instrumentation guidelines.
- Open to students with at least one year of playing experience.
- Performs at school concerts, UIL Concert and Sight-reading Competition, and invitational festivals at the discretion of the directors.

### **HIGH SCHOOL ORCHESTRA - LOVEJOY HIGH SCHOOL**

- There are four levels of orchestra - the most advanced is Chamber Orchestra, medium advanced is Concert, medium is Symphony Orchestra, and developing is Philharmonic Orchestra.
- Admission is by audition with strict adherence to instrumentation guidelines.
- Open to students with at least one year of playing experience.
- Performs at school concerts, UIL Concert and Sight-reading Competition, and invitational festivals at the discretion of the directors.

# **HOW TO SUCCEED IN ORCHESTRA (and Life)**

## **For best results:**

1. Arrange a time and quiet place where practice can be done without interruptions.
2. Practice should become a part of your daily routine and you should never just put in the required time, but practice with the goal of always improving.
3. Behind every successful music student is an interested parent or other adult. Find your support system to help you!
4. Countless times adults have said to us, "If only I hadn't quit music lessons..." We have NEVER heard the words, "I'm sorry I can still play."

## **For Parents:**

1. Very few children will practice without reminders. They're just like other humans - given the chance, they would much rather play than work. Practicing is rewarding but it is work!
2. Encourage the student to play for family and friends, but don't force them to.
3. Listen to your student's practice and acknowledge improvement.
4. Reward consistent practice. For example, 6 days in a row, ice cream, a movie rental, etc. Make the reward fit the goal.
5. Help them through all the bad sounds until they sound beautiful. Then the student will gain confidence in what they have achieved.
6. Children do have time for practice in their busy schedules, but it usually takes an adult to help them find that time.
7. Children sent to practice while the rest of the family watches TV or does something else fun together will not want to practice.
8. Never apologize to others for your child's weak performance.
9. Never criticize their sounds no matter how bad it seems to you.

## **REPAIRS AND SUPPLIES**

If an instrument should need repair, please consult your director. Many repairs can be done by the director, and if they are unable to repair the instrument, please take it to the music dealer from whom the instrument was purchased or rented. Supplies are essential items for orchestra class and can be obtained locally. Students will learn proper care for each instrument and what supplies are needed to keep their instrument in working order.

Students must have these classroom supplies for orchestra:

- ★ 1 inch 3 ring binder with pockets, clear plastic page protectors, and notebook paper
- ★ Pencils and Pencil Pouch for your orchestra binder
- ★ Wire folding music stand and a metronome for at-home practice
- ★ Shoulder rests for violins and viola, Rockstops for cellos and basses
- ★ Method Book (depending on class)

## **SCHOOL-OWNED INSTRUMENTS**

Cello and Bass students will be provided with a school-owned instrument to use during their class period and rent/purchase an instrument for home practice. If accidental damage occurs to the instrument as a result of the student or it is lost or stolen while in the student's possession, it becomes the responsibility of the parents/guardians to pay for the repairs or replacement. Students will use their home instrument for performances, unless otherwise instructed by a director.

Violin and viola students will bring their instrument to school. If renting an instrument is a financial issue, please don't hesitate to talk with us, as there are ways to work this out. We have instruments for the students to use at school if necessary. We don't want a financial matter to stand in the way of a student participating in orchestra. Please see a director for information regarding purchasing an instrument. Selecting a string instrument for purchase is an important process. Please be careful of Internet deals. Always purchase an instrument from someone in person.

## **PARENT VOLUNTEERS/BOOSTER CLUB**

Parent involvement is vital for our program to succeed. We have many opportunities for parents to participate in orchestra events, social events, trips, etc. We encourage you to get involved with the Lovejoy Orchestra Booster Club. Information on joining will be sent home with your student. As directors, we can't thank you enough for your willingness to donate your time and energy to this program.

## **ATTENDANCE**

Attendance at all orchestra performances is required. Those students participating in the orchestra program have made a commitment to its members and directors. It is impossible to achieve the balance we strive for everyday if students are missing from the performance. Students receive grades for all concerts performed on campus as they are considered an extension of the academic class.

**Students will be expected to attend orchestra concerts in their entirety.** Listening and being an audience member is an important part of the music education experience and is a required skill mandated by the state of Texas.

## Orchestra Event Absence Policy:

Written notice from parents is required for all absences for orchestra events. Verbal excuses from students are **not** accepted. Excused absences include:

- 1.) Personal illness
- 2.) Family Emergency
- 3.) A Prior commitment...In this case, the instructor must be notified as soon as possible to determine if it is an excused absence. Activities that are not Lovejoy ISD sponsored activities are not considered to be excused absences.

Students with an excused absence will have the opportunity to make up this grade, but it is the student's responsibility to make arrangements for any make up work. Unexcused absences from concerts will count as a zero on a major grade.

## ELIGIBILITY

Participation in some orchestra events may be effected by the eligibility rules set by the University Interscholastic League. If students are not passing all their classes with a grade of 70 or above, they may not be allowed to participate in certain events. Please see the calendar for which events are effected by eligibility rules.

## PERFORMANCE DRESS

Members of the Lovejoy Orchestra program will be issued a uniform for formal concerts (except Beginning Orchestra). Lovejoy Orchestra members are encouraged to purchase a orchestra shirt. We will wear these shirts with nice jeans or shorts for all casual orchestra events. Also, these shirts reflect pride in our orchestra program and school spirit. Some concerts will be more formal and appropriate dress will be required.

- **CASUAL DRESS:** Orchestra shirt and jeans or nice shorts and tennis shoes.
- **FORMAL DRESS:** Students will wear their concert uniform issued to them at registration. Students must wear black dress shoes. No casual sandals or flip flops. No tennis shoes.
- **BEGINNING ORCHESTRA FORMAL DRESS:** Girls - Nice dress or blouse and pants, Boys - dress pants and dress shirt. No tennis shoes or flip flops.

## PRIVATE MUSIC LESSONS

**Every student** can benefit from individual study because they allow progress commensurate with individual ability. Plus, your student will be studying with a specialist on their particular instrument. Students who study with an individual instructor almost always develop a higher confidence and skill level. Private teacher names and information can be obtained from a director.

## ORCHESTRA GRADING PROCEDURES

The three most important things a orchestra student must do are:

1. Practice regularly!
2. Be in attendance at concerts and musical events!
3. Turn in all assignments on time and be organized!

Playing an instrument is a skill that develops with time. Lack of practice and frequent absences will cause a orchestra student to fall behind. **Participation** is the orchestra experience.

The six weeks grade is a combination of the individual grade categories listed below:

1. Playing tests (may include taped and live performance of test material or via Smart Music)
2. Performance grades (concerts)
3. Written tests and quizzes (procedures, music theory, instrumental information)
4. Materials checks (having all music/method books in class every day)
5. Participation
6. Fundamentals/Skill Development grades

Good discipline is intertwined with a student's ability to be successful in orchestra. The orchestra has a tremendous responsibility as one of the representatives of our school. The public forms their opinion about our school from the behavior we exhibit as a performing group. Orchestra students must be trusted to exhibit excellent behavior and citizenship at all times. **Those students whose behavior becomes problematic will be denied performance and/or activity privileges with the orchestra.**

## PRACTICE ROUTINE

Practice is sometimes fun, sometimes difficult, and **ALWAYS NECESSARY!** The best way to make practice time more enjoyable and productive is to get into a regular habit of practicing every day. **LOOK FOR IMPROVEMENT!** Don't just "put in your time". When playing improves, then all the time spent practicing will seem worthwhile. A good practice routine would be structured along the following lines:

**Concentrate on getting a GOOD SOUND!** It makes no difference how fast, loud, or high you can play if the tone is not enjoyable to listen to. **NEVER SACRIFICE ACCURACY FOR SPEED.** Practice the parts that you cannot play first. It makes no sense to spend all of your time practicing the music you can already play well. And always, **ADD TO THE ORCHESTRA'S SOUND, NEVER DETRACT FROM IT.** Practice to be a great part of the orchestra!

**REMEMBER: Regular daily practice is the key to improving on your instrument.**

