

Bailey Orchestra Welcome

Dear Members and Parents,

Welcome to the 2016 – 2017 Bailey Orchestra Program!!

My name is Linda McArthur and I am very proud to represent Bailey Middle School and our award-winning Orchestra Program. The Bailey Orchestra yearly places many students in the All Region and City Symphonies. Our students consistently win top ratings in both Solo and Ensemble Contest as well as UIL Orchestra competition often earning “Best in Class” at Spring Festival competitions.

The mission of the Bailey Orchestra is to provide a fun atmosphere for the disciplined pursuit of creative musical expression through practice, positive attitude, commitment and teamwork while striving to improve ourselves and produce memorable superior performances.

Playing an instrument has many rewards. It is a means of expression that requires a commitment of your physical, emotional and intellectual abilities. The discipline and skills you learn in orchestra will serve students well in the future, no matter what career they choose to pursue.

The purpose of this handbook is to acquaint both students and parents with the orchestra program by setting forth basic expectations and procedures to be followed throughout the year. An organized calendar of events which includes all students and parents is necessary in building and maintaining the highest quality orchestra program.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions, comments or concerns. Please read this handbook and sign the letter of acknowledgment page at the end.

Please return no later than Friday, August 26th.

Looking forward to a great year!!

Linda McArthur, Director

512-414-5464

linda.mcarthur@austinisd.org

BaileyOrchestra@gmail.com

Materials Needed for Orchestra Class

Instrument / Bow / Case / Rosin

Shoulder Rest (violin & viola)

Rock Stop (Cello & String Bass)

1" Black 3 ring binder / 5 tab dividers

Composition Notebook (provided)

Folding Music stand (for home practice & field trips)

Digital tuner / metronome or APP

Mute and Practice Mute

A quiet place to practice and lots of support

MUSIC FOLDER TABS

Daily Warm-Ups

1. Technical Exercises
2. Concert Music
3. Solo & Chamber Music
4. Staff Paper / Music Theory
5. Music History

Course Descriptions

BEGINNING ORCHESTRA consists of those students who are learning a stringed instrument for the first time. Emphasis will be on the development of correct left and right hand posture, bowing techniques, note reading, ear training, intonation, music theory and ensemble performance. Beginning orchestra students will participate in two music festivals and four school concerts during the year. BEFORE SCHOOL AND ADVISORY CLASS SECTION REHEARSALS ARE NOT REQUIRED.

JUNIOR VARSITY ORCHESTRA consists of intermediate level students who desire additional training in order to meet the performance standards of the Varsity Orchestra. The overall curriculum and requirements are very similar to the Varsity Orchestra class within a smaller group setting. ALL BEFORE SCHOOL SECTION REHEARSALS ARE REQUIRED. ALL FIELD TRIP PERFORMANCES ARE REQUIRED.

VARSITY ORCHESTRA consists of experienced players who meet performance standards as established by the director. Emphasis will be on the continuation of improving correct posture, note reading skills, sight-reading, left hand dexterity, bowing techniques, ear training and intonation in addition to exploring new hand positions, scales, vibrato, instrument tuning, music theory, solo & ensemble performance and orchestral literature. ALL BEFORE SCHOOL SECTION REHEARSALS ARE REQUIRED. ALL FIELD TRIP PERFORMANCES ARE REQUIRED.

A quality orchestra program emphasizes musicianship on a high level of performance. This requires knowledge in rhythm, melody, interpretive and technical skills. Orchestra class will include the following topics:

- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| 1. Care and handling of the instruments | 9. Dynamic control |
| 2. Correct posture and playing position | 10. Articulation |
| 3. Instrumental technique | 11. Music reading skills |
| 4. Intonation | 12. Music Sensitivity |
| 5. Right hand technique | 13. Performance skills |
| 6. Left hand technique | 14. Music literature |
| 7. Rhythmic skills | 15. Music theory |
| 8. Phrasing control | 16. Music history |

Classroom Expectations

The best orchestras are well organized and each rehearsal is conducted with maximum efficiency. In order to create an environment where the most desirable learning conditions exist, each student should carefully study the following:

1. BE ON TIME TO CLASS AND TO PERFORMANCES. Be in your seat with instrument, music and pencil within one minute of the tardy bell. A referral may be written for excessive tardies.

2. PREPARE FOR CLASS. Practice your music at home each day so that class time may be spent making music with the other members of your ensemble. 5 points or more will be deducted from the Daily grade for failure to bring materials to class each day.

3. INSTRUMENTS AND FOLDERS MUST BE TAKEN HOME EACH NIGHT. 20 points will be deducted from the Daily grade for failure to bring instrument home for home practice each day or failure to have instrument in class. A 30 minute after school detention may be assigned for excessive failure to bring materials to class or failure to practice at home.

4. REMAIN QUIET, ALERT AND FOCUSED DURING CLASS. 5 points will be deducted from the Daily grade for failure to participate well in class.

5. ASK PERMISSION TO TALK. Please raise your hand. 5 points will be deducted from the Daily grade for excessive talking in class.

6. MAKE MUSIC with your instrument only when asked to do so in class.

7. STAY IN YOUR SEAT unless you have permission to leave it.

8. RESPECT instruments, materials, the school, your teachers and your classmates.

9. GUM, CANDY, DRINKS, OR OTHER DISTRACTIONS SHOULD BE KEPT OUT OF THE ORCHESTRA ROOM. A 30 minute after school detention may be assigned for excessive violations of these expectations.

Class Goals

1. Establish a comfortable playing posture.
2. Establish a correct bow posture and learn many bowing styles.
3. Learn to read music with accuracy.
4. Learn to listen to your part and the parts that others are playing.
6. Make friends and make music!

Grading System

The following is an explanation of the orchestra grading system. There are three major categories:

- A. MAJOR PERFORMANCES – SIX WEEKS TEST GRADE
- B. PARTICIPATION AND WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS – DAILY GRADE
- C. PLAYING TESTS AND PREPARATION – TEST GRADE

A. Major Performances:

1. Major performance attendance is taken into account because performing is the culmination of the work completed during the grading period. Performances which are missed cannot be made up. Once that performance is missed, it is missed forever. An updated calendar of performances and/or events for the entire year is included in this handbook.

2. If a conflict other than illness or extreme emergency occurs, notification and a request for permission to miss the event must be submitted **in writing** by the parents/guardian to the director **at least one week in advance** of the scheduled performance (**to be approved**). Students who are absent because of illness or emergency should make every attempt to notify the director prior to the performance. **If a student misses a major performance without prior approval, the final six weeks grade will be lowered.**

B. Participation and written assignments:

1. Students must participate well in class every day. To do this, the student must have their instrument (in proper playing condition) as well as their bow, rosin, shoulder rest (violins & violas), music folder and pencil. The student must be actively participating in proper playing position and giving their best effort in sound, tone production and accuracy.

2. Student members of the Chamber Orchestra and Junior Varsity Orchestra are required to attend all Before School and Advisory Class rehearsals. Participation Points will be subtracted for missed sectionals. (See page: Extra Rehearsals) Students and Parents are encouraged to work together to Car Pool to the 7:30 AM Rehearsals. Please feel free to contact the director for assistance.

3. Students will keep an Interactive Orchestra Journal. Students will have listening and writing assignments in their Journal to learn about music theory and music history. There will be periodic assignments and tests which will count towards this portion of the grade

C. Playing Tests and Preparation:

1. As with other performing electives, students must learn to perform in front of each other. During performance assessment, each student will perform the assignment at his/her seat. While a student is testing, the remainder of the class will continue to be quiet and courteous towards the performer. Any student who speaks, or makes any disrespectful gesture to a colleague during testing, will have their performance test grade lowered by 10 points for each infraction.

2. Students are required to practice 30 minutes or more per day. Students are required to document their practice time and have parents sign and date this report each week.

Extra Credit can be earned as follows:

- Attending approved Live music events
- Austin Youth Orchestra Member

Preparation

1. It is strongly recommended for students to practice at least 15 – 30 minutes each and **every day**.
2. Students will calculate the number of minutes practiced using the decimal system. Students may use their School Assignment Notebook, their Orchestra Journal or any other organized method to document their home practice time.
3. Students will practice a minimum of 15 minutes at a time. Students are encouraged to practice 30 minutes each day. Two and one half Hours are required to receive full credit for this important portion of students' grade.
4. Parents will Sign and Date the Documentation of Home Practice Time at the beginning of each week.

In the decimal system, 15 minutes equals .25 hours

15 minutes = .25 hour (One quarter hour)

30 minutes = .5 hour (half hour)

45 minutes = .75 hour (Three quarters of an hour)

Practice Record Time Grading

3+ hours = 100, 2.75 hours = 99, 2.5 hours = 98

2 hours = 92, 1.5 hours = 84, 1 hour = 76

Practicing:

Dear Parents:

As adults, we understand that progress and achievement are the results of effort. Students need to learn this as well, and it is, in fact, one of the most important principles to learn and will help them with schoolwork and throughout life. Helping string students to practice on a regular basis at home will not only help them become better musicians, but better citizens as well.

Students need continued encouragement to practice, because practicing takes discipline and effort. Help your child establish a regular time and place for practicing that works in your family's schedule. Monitor your child's practice on a regular basis to ensure that it is getting done. Talk with your child about the need for practice, and set up mutually agreed upon goals and rewards. The goals should be clear and attainable. The rewards should be something valuable and enjoyable to the child.

Frequently ask your child to perform for you, demonstrating the skills, knowledge, and new music learned while practicing at home. Praise your child's practice efforts regularly in front of family members and their peers. It will make them feel good about their efforts and about themselves. It will also encourage them to continue practicing and help deepen their relationship with you.

Point out to your child the progress they have made on their instrument, and how many more notes and pieces they can now play compared to when they started, for example. Encourage your child to make up their own music as directed by their teacher. Help your child to remember their past successes as motivators to work toward future successes.

Practicing takes effort, and encouraging students to practice regularly takes effort. However, practice is essential for learning, and it helps develop students' work habits that they can take with them throughout life. Please do not hesitate to contact me for additional suggestions.

Sincerely,
Linda McArthur

Parents – How you fit in

Always keep in mind that your support is an essential element in your child's success in music study.

Schedule Practice Times

Music achievement requires effort over a period of time. The time in orchestra rehearsal is limited. New concepts learned at school need daily personal practice at home by your child for these new skills to be developed. You can help your child by:

- Providing a quiet place in which to practice
- Remaining nearby during practice times as often as possible
- Scheduling a consistent daily time for practice
- Praising your child's efforts and achievements

What to do

To give your child the best possible support, you should:

- Remind your child to bring their instrument and music to class
- Encourage your child to play for family and friends
- Offer compliments and encouragement regularly
- Expose your child to a wide variety of music, including concerts
- Make sure your child's instrument is well maintained
- Listen to your child practice and acknowledge improvement
- Help your child build a personal music library
- Attend all your child's concerts

Instrument Care and Maintenance

- NEVER do home repairs: one false move can destroy the value of your instrument. All repairs should be done by a professional.
- Keep the instrument away from radiators and heaters.
- Never leave the instrument in the trunk of your car. Summer heat can actually cause varnish to bubble or melt off. Glue also dissolves in heat, leaving one's instrument vulnerable to open seams.
 - Never leave the instrument in plain sight in the passenger part of your car. This can be an invitation for a thief.
- Do not put scotch tape, masking tape, or lick-on stickers on your instrument.
- Always loosen the bow after playing.
- Use a natural fiber cloth to wipe rosin off the instrument whenever you've ceased playing for the day. Too much leftover rosin is bad for the sound and finish.
- Periodically check your bridge for straightness (or have your teacher check it). A warped bridge will eventually fall over and/or crack.
- Occasionally check any fine tuners to make sure they are not wound too tight. If they are, loosen them and retune with the pegs under the supervision of the teacher.
- When you need to change an entire set of strings, do not remove all of the old ones at once. You will lose the proper placement of the bridge, and the lack of tension may cause the sound post to fall down.
- Be careful not to tap the tip of your bow against anything solid (even gently). This very delicate part of the bow breaks easily and is very difficult to repair. If any parts of the bow should fall off (such as the ivory button or slide), hang on to them and take the bow in for immediate repair: these are very expensive to replace.
- If you use a shoulder-rest, be sure to remove it before closing the case over your instrument. Forcing a case closed could crack the top of your violin or viola.
 - Always check to see that the case is fully latched and zippered before you pick it up.
- Label the instrument case with your name, address and phone number, just "in case."

ORCHESTRA CONTRACT

As a student member of the Bailey Orchestra, I understand that I am required to attend all the Concerts and events in which my Orchestra is scheduled to perform.

As a student member of the Bailey Orchestra, I understand that it is my obligation to practice on a regular basis at home. I understand that being in the Orchestra is compared to being on an athletic team and that if I don't do my part, I let the team down. I understand that it is a privilege to be able to participate in Music Festivals and that I must do my preparation beforehand every night.

As a student member of the Bailey Orchestra, I will assume these obligations and responsibilities and follow all rules and regulations OR I must forfeit the privileges of attending music festivals and other social events of the Orchestra. I also understand that infringement of these rules also affects my grade in Orchestra.

By signing below, I verify that I have read and understand the Orchestra handbook, the expectations and grading system.

Please print neatly. Sign and date. Return this page no later than Friday, August 26th.

Student name: _____ (print)

Student email _____

Parent / Guardian Information

Mother: _____

Phone(s): _____

Email: _____

Father: _____

Phone(s): _____

Email: _____

Extra Contact: _____

Phone(s): _____

Email: _____

Student's signature _____ date _____

Parent's signature _____ date _____

Orchestra Parent Volunteers

Welcome to another exciting year of musical activities! Our goal is to provide your children with superior instruction accompanied by enriching activities that will foster a lifelong love of music. We cannot accomplish this without our fabulous parent volunteers!!! Please take a moment and let us know how you can help us this year:

- Bear Day
- Masquerade Concert Chaperone
- Winter Concert Chaperone
- Pre-UIL Concert Chaperone
- Pre-UIL Festival
- Renaissance Festival (Advanced musicians only)
- Fall String Festival (Beginning Orchestra only)
- UIL Concert & Sight Reading Competition
- Valentine Carnation Fundraiser (2 weeks)
- Beginner Solo & Ensemble Competition
- AISD Solo & Ensemble Competition
- Orchestra Spring Music Festival Competition
- Epic Trip (Chamber Orchestra)
- Uniforms
- Photography
- Technology

Got a creative idea, talent or resource? Just let us know! THANK YOU!

** See Orchestra Handbook for Calendar Dates. Feel free to contact me if you have any questions.