

Space Center Intermediate School Orchestras

Dear Parents and Students,

Welcome to the Space Center Intermediate Orchestra. We are looking forward to becoming more acquainted with each of you and continuing the success of each of our one hundred and eighty orchestra students.

We believe that everyone in the orchestra has the potential to be a success. Our philosophy is the better you are at your instrument, the more you like it. Our job is to help everyone reach his/her full potential as a performer and to help each student develop a love for music that will last a lifetime.

The immediate goal is to see you grow musically as a part of an outstanding orchestra program. We are also here to provide you with the opportunity to develop the life-skills of poise, self discipline, leadership, confidence, group cooperation, responsibility, problem solving, goal setting, self-expression, concentration, self-confidence and self-esteem. Your music study also offers opportunities for shared family experience including musical event attendance, family music making, performing for and with family and friends. You will also be learning about the lives of composers and the cultural heritage of many civilizations. This will provide a sense of accomplishment and pride for the entire family. Many truly successful people point to their orchestra experience as a major reason for their success in life.

In this packet you will find information about:

Grading Policy
Supplies/Uniforms

Private Lessons
Concert Descriptions

Please return forms by September 1st. We will keep these on file and use on every trip with the students. This will be an extraordinary year!

Sincerely,

Ms. Black and Mrs. Kidwell
SCIS Orchestra Directors

Space Center Intermediate Orchestra Handbook 2011-2012

The purpose of this handbook is to provide a written policy on the organization and operation of the orchestra program. Your parents are responsible for reading, signing, and returning the form that states that they have read and understand the orchestra policies. This is so they will have a greater understanding of your work in orchestra.

ORCHESTRA ROOM REGULATIONS

These rules are for the protection of you, your instrument, and school equipment. Breaking these rules may cause loss of chair, damaged instruments, or disciplinary action by the director.

1. Follow all directions the first time they are given
2. **No running or horseplay in the orchestra room.**
3. All instruments in the room are off limits – except your own.
4. Absolutely no instrument swapping or using anyone else's instrument.
5. No vandalizing the music stands, chairs, instruments, rooms, or other equipment.

REGULATIONS THAT MAY AFFECT YOUR GRADE

1. Keep a pencil in your folder and on your music stand at all times.
2. Be in your seat before the tardy bell with instrument, music, and related equipment everyday.
3. All instruments and music must go home every night.
4. **Students must attend and participate in all scheduled performances and rehearsals.**
5. Students must remain quiet during chair tryouts and playing tests.

PUBLIC PERFORMANCES: Orchestra in a performance class. Students are given a yearly calendar of events in order to avoid conflicts. Any performances not listed on the calendar will be presented to the students at least two weeks before the date and they will be given an opportunity to check the availability of the date. Students are required to fit their schedules to these events. Per District policy, if a student misses a required performance, they will receive a "0" as a performance grade and will be excluded from the next social activity. Performances are 20% of the total 9 weeks grade.

CONTESTS: The University Interscholastic League sets rules and regulations that we must comply with in order to compete in most contests. The music contests we will be entering are:

Region Orchestra: Auditions are held in October/ Concert in January
Solo and Ensemble Contest: February
UIL Concert and Sight Reading Contest: March/April
American Classic competition or Galveston competition April/May

Note: The dates have been provided on the calendar but exact playing times will not be known until the drawing for times takes place, usually two weeks prior to the contest.

PRIVATE LESSONS: Private lessons are strongly encouraged. Private lessons will benefit your investment in the talent of your child. Please have your student ask for a form to sign up for lessons.

MATERIALS FOR ORCHESTRA:

Every student must have the following materials:

Pencil	violin/viola: shoulder rest
Rosin	cello/bass: slip stop (bring to concerts)
Soft cloth	bass: stool

Name tag on your case

Music stand for home practice

Electric Tuner (Symphony and Chamber must have)

ADVANCED STUDENTS MUST HAVE A BLACK BINDER FOR MUSIC WITH 5 DIVIDERS labeled: Event Information, Warm up, Music, Theory, and Old Music.

UNIFORMS:

The advanced orchestra boys will wear a white tuxedo shirt, black slacks (NOT JEANS) black socks and black shoes. The tux shirt, a cummerbund and bow tie will be provided. Girls must wear the uniform dress selected by the orchestra society (SCOS).

If a student comes to a performance without the appropriate uniform, he/she will receive a grade of “70” for the performance.

DOING YOUR BEST IN ORCHESTRA

Your grade will be based on the following averages for each 9 weeks:

1. TESTS

These include playing tests and written tests

2. HOMEWORK

At some point during the year, we might have practice cards. Practicing is expected to happen every night. We will be using our agendas to keep it organized.

3. PARTICIPATION GRADE

- The student will receive a grade for each before and after school sectional and rehearsal during a grading period.
- The student will be on task and focused during all rehearsals.
- The student will be prepared to play his/her part successfully.
- The student will mark music and take notes as needed.

4. PERFORMANCE GRADE

All concerts and contests factor into this grade.

5. READING ASSIGNMENT

A playing or written test will be given to assess a student's progress over the nine weeks.

CONDUCT AND GRADE REQUIREMENTS: Students are required to maintain good conduct and grades in all classes. The orchestra parents have too much time and money invested in your musical education to allow poor discipline to interrupt the learning process. Orchestra teaches self discipline, as well as teamwork! Students who continually disrupt the class and keep other children from learning will not be allowed to continue in the orchestra program.

If a student misses a grade in one of these areas due to an absence, he/she is responsible for making up the grade within the time allotted in the school handbook. Per district policy, absences for performances will not be excused unless extreme circumstances are unavoidable. Absences for rehearsals will not be excused without at least 2 weeks notice before the rehearsal. No extra curricular activities or lack of planning when scheduling appointments will be excused.

Things Parents Can Do To Help Their String Student Succeed

Most parents think that if they know little or nothing about music, they cannot help their child who is in Strings. Here are a few things you can do, even if your greatest talent is playing the radio.

1. **Encourage.** A good word from you every now and then will go a long way. If your child is improving and working hard you will hear it. Let them know that you hear it and appreciate their hard work.
2. **Listen.** Perhaps this may not be easy. However, it is important that the student practices a few minutes EVERY day to build confidence and coordination. The recommended time is 30 minutes each day and increasing as needed as the student becomes more advanced.
3. **Change the Station.** Your child should be working on a variety of things from class. If you hear only the same thing over and over, ask him what he is working on in class. Chances are he is playing only what he is already good at instead of working on the things with which he has trouble.
4. **Brush off the tarnish.** After the honeymoon of having a new instrument has begun to fade, it takes a little motivation to keep it your child's interest in the instrument. See your child through the hills, the valleys, and the dreaded plateaus (when they would rather even clean up their room than practice!). Let them clean the room but also insist that they put in at least a few minutes of practicing. They may not thank you later, but how many times have you thought, "I wish my parents had made me do . . .".
5. **Show your support.** When your child performs in a concert, no matter how many hundreds of people are there, they are playing the very best just for you. **BE THERE!**

Any questions? Feel free to call us anytime. You may call the school during the day and leave a message (281) 284-3385. We will get back to you as soon as possible. **Email is a much faster way for us to respond** if you have access to it. Lblack@ccisd.net for violins, violas and harp parents and jkidwell@ccisd.net for cello and bass parents.