

2009-2010 LJIS Orchestra Handbook



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Dear Parents and students,

Welcome to the new school year for what will no doubt be an exciting year with the Lake Jackson Intermediate School Orchestra. We look forward to a rewarding year of learning and excitement through making music! Congratulations on your choice of continuing with orchestra as your elective. You will find that Orchestra is a rewarding and enriching experience that will stay with you for the rest of your life! I look forward to sharing the joy of music with your child this year. I know that together we will maintain the tradition of excellence that the Lake Jackson Panther Orchestra represents.

Having a student in orchestra is so much more than attending concerts. Students will be challenged both mentally and physically in ways which are unique to a musical experience, and in a manner which has been recognized as stimulating the student's intellectual and social capabilities to their utmost potential.

A successful Orchestra is not possible without strong parent support. I ask you to continue to get behind your child and encourage them to excel. It makes a huge difference in a young person's growth as a musician to have parental support and encouragement at home. If you have any questions throughout the school year do not hesitate to call me at 979.730.7250 ext. 24250. You can also reach me at the email address below.

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Preface

This handbook has been written for the Lake Jackson Intermediate School Orchestra members and their parents in order to provide information regarding the purpose, procedures, expectations and activities of the orchestra program. Parents and students must be familiar with all guidelines contained in this handbook to avoid conflicts with policies and schedules. Supplemental information and/or policy and schedule changes will be distributed via email and printed handouts.

GOALS OF THE ORCHESTRA PROGRAM

- > Represent our school and community in a positive manner.
- > Learn proper care, handling, and maintenance of a stringed instrument.
- > Learn proper concert etiquette through participation in and attendance of live performances.
- > Develop self-confidence and self-discipline in each student through positive interaction with teachers and peers.
- > Develop self-expression and creativity through practice and performance.

PANTHER ORCHESTRA CLASS RULES

- 1) RESPECT THE RIGHTS AND PROPERTY OF OTHER STUDENTS AND ADULTS BY BEING POLITE, PATIENT, AND COURTEOUS
 - 2) BRING YOUR INSTRUMENT AND SUPPLIES TO SCHOOL EVERY DAY AND BE READY TO REHEARSE WHEN THE BELL RINGS.
 - 3) RAISE YOUR HAND FOR PERMISSION TO TALK OR LEAVE SEAT.
 - 4) LISTEN TO AND FOLLOW DIRECTIONS THE FIRST TIME THEY ARE GIVEN
- ### **ADDITIONAL CLASSROOM EXPECTATIONS AND GUIDELINES**

- > A note signed by either a parent, doctor, or the school nurse will be the only excuse accepted for not playing on any day.
- > When the director steps in front of the Orchestra, ALL TALKING STOPS!
- > Students should not talk during the rehearsal (class period) unless otherwise instructed.
- > Food, drink, gum, or candies are not permitted in the orchestra room at any time, unless permission is given by the teacher.

- > Use proper posture and technique when playing your instrument. Watch the conductor.
- > Put your pencil to the music whenever possible.
- > Ask non-musical or private questions before or after the rehearsal.
- > Clean your instrument and bow after each rehearsal (3 minutes before the bell). Caked on rosin can negatively affect the sound of your instrument!
- > Wait behind the door and visit quietly before the teacher dismisses you.
- > Take your instrument and I or binder home every day.

Additional Orchestra Procedures

Instrument Drop-off — you will be issued a pass to access the orchestra room before and after school. You will need to keep this pass with you at all times, as you will not be allowed to enter the orchestra room before or after school without it.

Do not bring non-orchestra students into the Orchestra hall. You are not allowed in the Band or Choir room, and your friends in Band and/or Choir are not allowed in the Orchestra room.

Access to the orchestra room before and after school is a privilege that will be revoked if you abuse it. It is your responsibility to report any inappropriate conduct or misuse of school facilities to Mr. Rickaway, a music teacher, or one of the principals.

Concerts — all students will be expected to provide their own transportation for themselves and their instruments unless otherwise indicated. A bus will be provided any time orchestra students are expected to perform outside of the district.

Students who play larger instruments will need to make arrangements to get their school instrument to the concert. If you share your instrument with someone in another class, one of you will need to sign up to bring the instrument to the concert.

Specific instructions will be provided for each concert to help all students arrive on time and in the right place.

Reward trip — In order to participate in reward activities, each student must meet the following criteria:

- Maintain eligibility for all orchestra events (concerts and contests) for the school year.
- No write-ups in orchestra class
- Participate in all concerts
- Participate in Solo and Ensemble Contest as well as UIL Concert and Sight-reading contest.

DISCIPLINE PLAN

The above procedures, if broken, follow the BISD code of conduct as minor offenses in the classroom. The following Procedures may be implemented if classroom rules are not followed: verbal warning, private student conference, parent contact, office referral. Excessive and repeat behavior problems will result in more severe consequences which will be determined by the teacher and administrators.

CONDUCT

Your child's conduct grade will be based on the following criteria:

1. E = few warnings, if any, for disruptive behavior
2. S = occasional warnings for disruptive behavior
3. I = frequent warnings for disruptive behavior
4. U = severe disruption, repeated removals from class

I will maintain records of such infractions, should they occur, and communicate frequently and clearly with the parent if conduct becomes a disruptive issue.

UIL ELIGIBILITY

Students are expected to maintain passing grades in all subjects in order to participate in contests. Eligibility will be checked at six-week end terms and at progress report time, with a one week grace period to retest or make up any missing work.

GRADING

Practice card — Daily grade each week. Practice cards are due Monday in class. Five points will be deducted for each day a practice card is late. Practice card will be accepted no later than Friday of the week they were due, unless the student has an excused absence from the school. Failure to turn in a practice card will result in a zero. **PRACTICE CARDS MUST BE SIGNED BY A PARENT OR THEY WILL NOT BE ACCPTED FOR A GRADE.**

After School Rehearsals/Sectionals — Students receive a 100% grade for being prepared and on time for each sectional or rehearsal that occurs outside of the school day. 20% of the rehearsal's grade is subtracted every ten minutes the student is tardy. Students will retain 100% of the missed points if the absence was an illness or family emergency. All other absences can be recovered to 90%. Any absence unaccompanied by

parental/staff notification can be recovered to 70%. Sectionals can be counted as 45 minutes of practice time. Indicate this on your practice card by printing: SR-45.

Playing Tests — playing tests are given approximately three to five times each six week period. If a student is absent from a playing test, it may be made up for full credit. If a student makes a failing grade and wishes to retest, he or she may do so for up to one week. 5% will be subtracted from the test grade for each attempt. If the test was a chair ranking test, the student can be ranked provided that they take the test no later than one day after the school day they return from illness.

Concert Participation — Performances are the outcome and evaluation of the student's efforts. Concert attendance is of the highest priority. Students receive a 100% grade on the six week test for being prepared and on time for each concert. FAILURE TO ATTEND A CONCERT WILL RESULT IN A ZERO UNLESS THE DIRECTOR HAS BEEN NOTIFIED PRIOR TO THE CONCERT OF AN ABSENCE. A MAKE-UP WRITING OR PERFORMANCE ASSIGNMENT MAY BE GIVEN AT THE DISCRETION OF THE DIRECTOR PROVIDED THAT A VALID EXCUSE IS PRESENTED IN WRITING BY THE PARENT/GUARDIAN OF THE STUDENT. It is also important to note that unexcused absences, including but not limited to schedule conflicts for sport events, non-emergency related family events, etc are not viewed as excusable absences therefore the student will forfeit his/her right to attend any reward activities.

Weekly Rehearsal Technique Grade — this portion of the grade is an evaluation of the orchestra student's participation in class. All students begin each week with a 100% grade in this category. Points are subtracted for the following infractions of class procedures noticed by the instructor:

- Forgets pencil or binder -10%
- Forgets instrument -20%
- Failure to watch the conductor -3%
- Poor playing posture I technique -3%

Theory - Any worksheets or written quizzes, count as assignments. Late written assignments receive a 5 point penalty for each day they are late.

Extra Credit - practicing over 180 minutes per week. +15 minutes is equal to +1% of the practice card grade, for a maximum of 110% for the week. Also, attending any musical performance that has a written program can be counted as extra credit. You and your parent will sign the program, and this will add 10 points to one practice card grade. Students can also earn extra credit by attending extracurricular Orchestra concerts such as the Brazosport Symphony or Houston Symphony, or other orchestra related performances. Students will need to submit the concert program with a parent signature and the student's name on it.

PRIVATE LESSONS

If students and parents want to take private lessons after school on a weekly basis the opportunity will be made available. Private lessons may be counted as practice time.

Some guidelines:

- Lessons are not required, but are highly recommended.
- If you must miss a lesson, you must notify the private instructor (not Mr. Rickaway) 24 hours in advance, or pay the lesson fee.
- Payment will be expected from unexplained and unexcused lesson absences.
- Private teachers are secured to teach the entire year, so make the commitment for the year.
- Students should keep a notebook to write down the instructor's goals and tips.
- Parents, monitor your child's lesson.

ATTENDANCE

Attendance at all concerts, rehearsals, and sectionals is mandatory because these are designated as curricular, as they are an extension of orchestra class. I am aware of the numerous demands placed upon students with all the activities they are involved in. Church, athletics, academics and social activities are just a few examples of the various activities the students may be involved in. With that in mind, I will present a calendar of events for the orchestra at the beginning of the year. Dates may change a bit, but I will do my best to present a calendar that is fairly accurate in presenting what activities the orchestra will be participating in throughout the year. The calendar will be sent home, and will also be available on the Orchestra website. As each date approaches, I will send home more detailed information. In case of conflict, the student must submit a written notice with a parent signature at least one week prior to the event. Written notices are not automatic approved excuses, but they do allow for proper notification and time for a dialogue to resolve any problems that might arise.

Orchestra is a "team" event and all students are important and necessary to the success of the group. Just as an athletic team suffers from the absence of a player, so does a section of orchestra players. Please be assured that I will work with student and parent as closely as possible to resolve any scheduling conflicts.

ORCHESTRA UNIFORMS

Formal Uniform — Black tuxedo shirt, black tuxedo pants, black dress shoes (NO TENNIS SHOES), black socks, red cummerbund. The Cummerbund and pants are provided by the Booster Club. You will need to purchase a black shirt; a note will be sent home with more information.

Informal Uniform is for field trips and informal contests. All students wear the orchestra t-shirt with school code pants I shorts and shoes.

REQUIRED SUPPLIES

ALL:

Black 3 ring binder. Take care of it and you can even use it in high school.

Pencil Pouch with 3 #2 pencils. A pencil is almost as important as your instrument. You need one every day.

Music Stand A folding, tubular metal stand with a bag for use at home.

Metronome Sabine Metrotune MT9000 — Metronome, chromatic tuner, also produces pitches.

Tourte Mute Rubber disc mute. You only need one.

Cleaning Cloth For removing sweat and rosin from the instrument. Lint-free rag -- an old t-shirt will do.

1 Box of Tissue

Essential Elements Books 1-3

VIOLIN/VIOLA

Rosin Any rosin, light or dark will do.

Shoulder Rest Buy Kun if you want a rigid shoulder rest or a purple sponge for softness.

CELLO:

Rosin Any Cello-specific rosin, light or dark will do.

End pin Rest Slip-Stop brand (colorful enamel top, rubber bottom) 4" disc.

BASS:

Rosin Pop's brand

End pin Rest Slip-Stop brand (colorful enamel top, rubber bottom) 4" disc

Stool For home use. Tall enough to sit with both feet on the floor and the knees slightly bent. Cushion recommended.

DESCRIPTION OF ENSEMBLES

The LJIS Orchestra program has three ensembles. The details of the classes are as follows:

Symphonic Orchestra - The Varsity ensemble. Symphonic orchestra students are required to perform in all concerts and clinics, Region Orchestra activities, UIL Solo and Ensemble, UIL String Orchestra Contest. Members consist of those capable of practicing faithfully and remaining academically eligible.

Students are expected to take private lessons.

Philharmonic Orchestra - The Junior Varsity ensemble. Philharmonic orchestra students are required to perform in all concerts and clinics, UIL String Orchestra Contest, and UIL Solo and Ensemble. Private lessons are encouraged.

String Orchestra — Students in this ensemble will focus on technique and performance, and will join the philharmonic orchestra for Winter and Spring concerts.

Ensemble numbers are chosen for section balance in proportion to incoming enrollment. Auditioning students are ranked according to playing ability, performance on tests, daily grades, as well as ability to follow classroom procedures. Students, you have been placed in the best possible ensemble for your technical ability, reading level, and group compatibility. Your ensemble placement is non-negotiable. Your parents will be notified of any reason to move you from one ensemble to another.

SUMMARY OF ORCHESTRA EVENTS

LJIS Orchestra is involved in several events and performances during the year. The following is a brief summary of these events:

Spaghetti Supper Concert: The first concert of the year; LJIS, Clute Intermediate, and Brazoswood High School perform selections including some region orchestra music as part of the high school orchestra's fund raiser. This concert takes place in late October.

All Region Orchestra: This is the "All Star" orchestra comprised of the best string players, grade 6 - 8, from over fifteen middle schools in the region. Section Rehearsals and individual help sessions on the audition music will be held before and after school starting the second week of school. After auditions in October, students receive the full program music to practice for seat ranking in January. After chairs are chosen, a clinician rehearses this honor ensemble. They also perform in January.

Fundraiser: In order for the orchestra students to pay for t-shirts, uniforms, contests, and equipment for the Orchestra, Students will be required to raise money by participating in a fundraiser. Students may be allowed to make a donation in lieu of fundraiser participation.

Winter Concert: This program combines the efforts of LJIS and Rasco onstage to perform traditional and lesser-known seasonal works.

Orchestra Pictures: This is your chance to have an individual portrait with the instrument, as well as a group photo.

Solo & Ensemble: S & E is the best outlet for individual improvement and achievement in orchestra. Students will prepare solo literature with their private teacher and Mr. Rickaway, and then rehearse with an accompanist. All orchestra students are required to prepare a solo.

Dessert Serenade: Students will perform their solos and/or ensembles and desserts will be served.

UIL Concert and Sight-reading: Each orchestra performs a full program and is evaluated as a group. In the sight reading contest, the orchestra is given a piece that has never been seen before and plays it onstage. Morning and afternoon section rehearsals and a guest clinic are required to prepare for this performance. The contest in March evaluates the level of teamwork and skill in the group.

Gordon Ranch Reward Trip: Students will participate in an outing to Gordon Ranch. In order to participate in this activity, each student must meet the following criteria:

1. Maintained eligibility for all orchestra events for the school year.
2. No write-ups in orchestra class
3. Participated in all concerts
4. Participated in Solo and Ensemble Contest as well as UIL Concert and Sight-reading contest

Spring Concert - students perform less traditional works at this concert, including popular music and film score music.

Good Behavior Mini Lock-in

Students who have received zero write-ups in orchestra will be able to attend the end of year mini-lock in. Some activities you can look forward to are dodge ball, basketball, and video games such as guitar hero or rock band.

Concert Etiquette

Students and parents are strongly encouraged to stay for the entire length of the concert.

- > Listen and be supportive of all performing groups.
- > Cell Phones, Pagers, and Digital Watches should be turned off, or in silent mode throughout the performance.
- > If you must leave during the performance, please leave between musical selections or during group changes on stage.
- > If you arrive late, do not enter during a performance. Wait until a selection ends before entering.
- > Whistling and cheering are not appropriate methods of applauding a concert performance. Vigorous clapping is just as effective!
- > If you have a crying child or noisy child, please take them out of the auditorium immediately. Also, it is unacceptable to have a child running up and down aisles during a performance. Performances are often recorded, and these noises can also distract both performers and audience members.
- > Do not move around or talk during a performance.
- > Students, maintain poise and composure on stage. Do not wave to audience members or make any sort of gesture. Do not talk to your neighbor.

These guidelines are given as a means to maintain a suitable performance environment for our students to showcase their talents and hard work. I know you will be mindful of these guidelines when attending any concert or performance!

Mailing List

To receive class handouts and reminders via email, please be sure to sign up for the orchestra mailing list. Please write your email address on the Parent Student Agreement form found at the end of this booklet. Handouts will also be available at my website for download.

Google Calendar

If you have a gmail account or google calendar of your own already set up, you can access the orchestra calendar by entering "Lake Jackson Intermediate Orchestra" in the calendar search. Otherwise you will be sent an email link to the Lake Jackson Intermediate Orchestra Calendar via email. This calendar can be viewed from virtually any computer and features up to date concert and event information; you can also sign up to receive email updates or have them sent directly to your cell phone.