

McLean Middle School

Orchestra Handbook

2016-2017

Welcome to the McLean Middle School Orchestra Program and hopefully a lifetime of music making! You are joining a top notch orchestra with many past successes! We are incredibly excited to be working with you this school year and hope you will find your orchestra experience a rewarding one. Please take the time to read through our orchestra handbook and return the forms. If you have any questions do not hesitate to contact us!

Contact Information

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Forms to be Completed by Parents

1. Handbook Form
2. Charms Update Form (MUST LOGIN ONLINE)
3. Instrument Use Form
4. Generic Student Permission for Trips in District
5. Booster Membership Form
6. Private Lesson Form
7. Private Lesson Financial Aid Application (optional)
8. Volunteer Background Check form (optional)

Course Overview

The orchestra class will provide instruction on the violin, viola, cello, bass, and harp. Students will develop the skills, concepts, and mastering of state mandated string playing objectives. In addition to classroom rehearsal, concerts will be performed during the school day and after school hours.

State & National Standards for Orchestra

1. Students sing, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music.
2. Students perform on instruments, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music.
3. Students improvise melodies, variations, and accompaniment.
4. Students compose and arrange music with specified guidelines.
5. Students read and notate music.
6. Students listen to, analyze, and describe music.
7. Students evaluate music and music performance.
8. Students understand the relationship between music, other arts, & other disciplines.
9. Students understand music in relation to history and culture.

Classroom Rules

1. Be on time with all required materials.
2. Follow directions immediately.
3. Remain engaged during class activities.
4. Keep hands, feet, and objects to yourself.
5. Speak positively to one another.
6. No food, drink, or gum. Water is acceptable.

Grading System

TEKS Rehearsal Grade (30%)

All students are given a daily grade of 10 points for their participation in the learning process. Classroom rule violations directly impact student participation; therefore, rule violations will result in daily grade point deductions.

Concerts/Rehearsals (30%)

Students are required to participate in a few concerts and after school rehearsals throughout the school year. The dates of these events will be clearly communicated in enough time for you to plan your schedule accordingly. Students are only excused in the case of illness or emergency. Any other absences must be discussed between the parents and the director prior to the concert/rehearsal. Excused absences will not have an alternate assignment. Unexcused absences can be made up with a written assignment for a 70%.

Tests (30%)

There will be at least four test grades given in a six week period. Instead of a weekly practice log grade, students will be tested more frequently on skill mastery. The tests may take place as a playing test in front of the class, a teacher, or Charms recording. Students may also be given tests on aural skills or other major assignments.

Written Work (10%)

There will be at least three written work grades given in a six week period. These may include notating rehearsal markings, practice journals, form completion, theory worksheets, listening activities, writing assignments, vocabulary tests, and music history assignments.

Practice

Orchestra homework consists mainly of practice time. Just like a student would spend a few minutes at home completing math problems, students must also spend time outside of class to master the skills taught in class. Music practice involves repetition and muscle memory. There is simply not enough time in class for students to master the necessary skills without practice at home. Students will not be given a traditional practice log. However, they may be given practice journals to record practice strategies. Student practice time will be primarily assessed by testing.

Recommended Practice Times: At least four days a week/30 minutes each day!

Calendar of Events

The following is a list of events that are known at this time. Check the classroom website for calendar updates. Events that are not required are marked by a *asterisk.

All Orchestra Students

Thursday September 8 th	Parent Meeting @ 6:30 in the McLean MS Orchestra Room
Thursday October 13 th	MS Fall Concert with Paschal Guest @ 6:30 in the McLean MS Auditorium
Thursday December 15 th	Winter Concert (6 th & MS) @ 6:30 in the McLean MS Auditorium
Tues.-Wed. February 14-15 th	Orchestra Benchmark @ Southwest High School
Thursday March 2 nd	Orchestra UIL Concert @ 6:30 in the McLean MS Auditorium
Tues.-Thur. March 7-9 th	Orchestra UIL @ Bowie High School
Friday & Saturday April 21-22	*MS San Antonio Trip
Thursday May 18 th	Spring Concert (6 th & MS) @ 6:30 in the McLean MS Auditorium
Saturday May 20 th	*FWISD MS Solo & Ensemble @ McLean MS

Varsity Orchestra Students

Friday September 9 th	9/11 Remembrance Ceremony @ 9:20am
Tuesday November 1 st	McLean Pyramid Night @ 6:30pm
Saturday November 5 th	TMEA Region Orchestra Auditions @ Rosemont MS
December ?	Holiday Performance at the FWISD Administration Building
Friday January 20 th	*TMEA Region Clinic @ Arlington High School
Saturday January 21 st	*TMEA Region Clinic & Concert @ Arlington High School

Audience Concert Etiquette

Students work very hard during the school year to prepare for concerts where their families and peers attend. They also have opportunities to attend field trips and performances away from school which represent our school. We will devote lessons to teaching concert etiquette and appreciate your support as we help our students understand the importance as listeners of music and as they develop their appreciation for music. The following guidelines have been developed so that we become active participants in proper concert etiquette:

1. During the performance of a piece, we will be respectful of the musician's hard work by remaining quiet during performances. If you are attending with small children, you may find it helpful to sit closer to the back of the audience to avoid disruptions should you need to leave during the performance.
2. We ask that cell phones are turned off during performances so that the focus can be on our children's performances.
3. Applause is appreciated for our hard work and is appropriate at the end of a single piece or at the end of the set of pieces by a single composer.
4. If you are entering a concert late or returning to a concert, please enter during the applause of a piece.
5. Because movement in the audience can be distracting to performers, we ask that you remain seated until the end of piece of music is completed.
6. Photographs are fun to take of your students and are wonderful memories for families to have. We suggest that you take photographs after the performance rather than during a performance so that students are able to focus on their director's conducting gestures.

Performer Concert Etiquette

During orchestra concerts, contests, trips, and rehearsal students are to exhibit proper concert etiquette and behavior. In addition to following the orchestra classroom rules, students are to represent McLean MS in a responsible manner. Poor conduct by an orchestra member during rehearsals, orchestra functions, or trips may result in the temporary suspension of that individual from orchestra activities. The director reserves the right to make these decisions.

Attendance

Orchestra concerts, contests, and rehearsals are not extra-curricular activities. They are part of the curriculum, and therefore, students are required to be at concerts and contests which may be held after regular school hours. Students are also not permitted to leave before the end of the performance.

An orchestra performs best with all members present. Therefore, students are required to participate in all rehearsals and performances unless excused by the director. Good communication can prevent misunderstandings. These rules pertain to all orchestra activities outside of class time.

- 1. Written notices from parents are required for all absences. Email is acceptable.**
- Not all conflicts will be excused. The rescheduling of other activities should be attempted to be granted an excuse. If a conflict consists with a McLean sport, please discuss with the issue with the coach. Then, let your director know if you are still having an issue with a sport conflict.
- Advance notice is required for all prior commitments in order for the absence to be excused. Advance notice cannot be given on the day of an event. Excuses will be given at the discretion of the director.
- In the case of illness or family emergency, the parents should send a written notice to the director as soon as they are aware of the situation. Regular doctor/dentist appointments are not excused absences.
- Exceptions cannot be made for students participating in other music ensembles or lessons unless permission is given in advanced by the director.

Make-up Assignments

If a student must miss a rehearsal or concert, they must contact the director following the guidelines stated above. Excused absences will not require a make-up assignment.

If the reason is not excused, the missed event can be made up by completing a written assignment given by the director for a 70%.

Academic Eligibility

In order to compete in UIL and competition events, students must remain academically eligible. They cannot receive a grade lower than 70% **in any subject** during a given six weeks in order to participate. They cannot become ineligible due to midterm grades, however, they may regain eligibility at midterm.

Concert Dress

Standard concert dress will be all black attire unless otherwise stated by the director. Students will wear their black orchestra polo, black pants, black dress shoes, and black socks. Girls have the option of wearing a black dress or skirt as long as it is appropriate for school, however, **they must also wear black leggings!**

Use of School Instruments

There are some school instruments available. These instruments must be checked out by the director and contracts must be signed by the parents and students. There is a \$80 a year instrument use fee that may be paid \$40 per semester. ANY DAMAGE INCURRED TO THE INSTRUMENT WHILE IN THE POSSESSION OF THAT STUDENT OR FAMILY IS THE SOLE FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY OF THE STUDENT AND PARENT.

Please contact the director in the case of financial need as other options are available.

This year, we will have more students than we have instruments available. Please do not purchase warehouse or internet instruments. Many of these may not be made of real wood and are actually 'toy' instruments. If you are looking to purchase an instrument, please ask us and we can help you find the best instrument in your price range. We can be a great resource for you.

If you are able to rent an instrument from a local music store, please assist our orchestra in this manner. Many of the music stores offer rent-to-own arrangements. Most of the money put towards rental will accumulate towards the purchase of a new instrument! The following places below have been vetted by your teachers. Please do everything you can to rent from one of these locations. You will get a better quality instrument.

Store	Location	Contact Info
Affordable Beginner Strings	South Arlington	(817) 460-0345
Jack Rasmussen	Central Arlington	www.jackrasmussenluthier.com
Wayne Burak (purchase)	Arlington	817-801-6700

Instrument Maintenance

1. Extreme temperatures are bad for instruments and can cause cracks, melted varnish, broken strings, and broken sound posts. Keep them away from radiators and other heat sources as well as air conditioning. **DO NOT LEAVE YOUR INSTRUMENT IN A HOT OR COLD VEHICLE.**
2. Always loosen the bow after playing to prevent the bow hair from falling out. Never bang your bow on the floor or stand as this can cause the tip to break. Rosin the bow on a consistent basis.
3. Check your bridge often to make sure it is not leaning one way or the other. If it needs to be adjusted ask your teacher.
4. Wipe your instrument and strings off each time you finish playing.
5. Strings may break. Worn out strings may need to be changed even if they are not broken.
6. Record the serial number, make, and model of your instrument for your records. Insure your personal instruments against damage and theft.
7. If something breaks on your instrument, **DO NOT ATTEMPT TO REPAIR IT YOURSELF.** Call or email your director.

Fundraisers

The McLean Orchestra Booster Club will be coordinating several fundraisers throughout the school year in order to make purchases for the ensemble. Fundraisers will go toward the purchase of refreshments for our concerts, professional clinicians, accompanists for Solo & Ensemble, technology, classroom needs, private lesson scholarships, and our Spring Trip. Please do everything you can to assist us in these fundraisers in order to benefit your education.

Supplies & Fees

In addition to the instruments, students will need the supplies listed below. Students will simply pay a Supply Fee to the McLean Orchestra Booster Club in order to streamline this process, receive discounts, and insure everyone has received the proper materials. The booster club will not be making profit off the Supply Fee but all money will be spent directly on the student supplies.

Students must pay in to purchase: <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Music Stand○ Tuner○ Orchestra Folder○ Rosin○ Cleaning cloth○ Pencils○ T-shirt○ Orchestra Polo○ Solo & Ensemble Fees○ Region Entry Fees○ Other Contest Entry Fees	FEE TOTAL: \$40 Other needed supplies: <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Shoulder Rest/Rock Stop <i>This will be provided for students using school instruments. Those obtaining their own instrument should also obtain their own shoulder rest and rock stop.</i>
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Charms Office

Charms office is a database for music educators. We keep track of student contact information, financial accounts, and test recordings. It is essential that your contact information is correct for traveling. An email list will also be used by the director for communicating important information to parents about concerts, rehearsals, and important announcements. **Please make sure your email is correct in Charms so you can stay in the know about orchestra announcements.**

Other Communication

The directors will use a variety of methods of communicating with students and parents. The McLean Orchestra Website will stay up to date with dates, handouts, assignments, and announcements. Please check it regularly if you have questions.

The orchestra website is located at: www.mcleanorchestra.com

Our Facebook Page: www.facebook.com/mcleanorchestrafw

Our Youtube Page: Search "shawnahoward56"

Our Shutterfly Account: www.mcleanorchestra.shutterfly.com

Password: cardinals

Remind101 is a free texting service for teachers. Students and Parents who sign-up can receive text reminders from the teacher without either party seeing the actual phone number. Standard text rate applies and you can unsubscribe at anytime. The director will use this for reminders about assignments, permission forms, concert times, rehearsal, etc. To sign up follow the instructions below.

MS Sub Non-Varsity Orchestra Students & Parents: Text @mcleansnv to 81010

MS Non-Varsity Orchestra Students & Parents: Text @mcleannvo to 81010

MS Varsity Orchestra Students & Parents: Text @mcleanvo to 81010

Private Lessons

Private lessons are highly recommended. It is in Middle School that most students begin taking private lessons. Private lessons are the tool that can really help your student to excel on their instrument. A private instructor who specializes in the same instrument as your child works one on one with the student to strengthen the individual weaknesses and further develop strengths. Private lessons also reinforce the skills taught in class. It is amazing how much quicker students can master skills such as tuning, playing in upper positions, vibrato and much more by studying privately. The private teachers in our schools have been selected to ensure that they are qualified professionals. Lessons are once a week, typically for 25 minutes. There may be some teachers who will be able to come to the school during orchestra class and others that can arrange time after school. Please see the Private Lesson packet for more information on lesson options and financial aid opportunities.

Awards

Students will be able to receive orchestra awards at the end of the school year based on their level of participation and commitment to the ensemble. The awards are given on a point system and are as follows:

Requirements:

Honors for 7th & 8th graders = 24-29 points

High Honors for 7th & 8th graders = 30-40 points

Middle School

Participation in Fall Concert Performance- 2 points	
Participation in Winter Concert Performance- 2 points	
Participation in UIL Concert Performance- 2 points	
UIL Concert <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Division 1- 3 points; Division 2- 2 points; Division 3- 1 point 	
UIL Sight-reading <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Division 1- 3 points; Division 2- 2 points; Division 3- 1 point 	
Choice Music Festival <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Division 1- 3 points; Division 2- 2 points; Division 3- 1 point 	
Region Orchestra <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Auditioned, not selected- 2 points • Selected and completed- 6 points 	
Solo & Ensemble Contest <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gold with honors- 5 points; Gold- 3 points; Silver- 2 points; Bronze- 1 point 	
Taking Private Lessons: 3 points per semester	
Daily Attitude & Cooperation (0-10 points) (Determined by the director from student's daily class grade)	
TOTAL POINTS	

Classroom Procedures

Entering the classroom

When entering the classroom, students are expected to check the board for necessary materials and directions. Students must unpack, order music, and be in their seat by the time the classroom timer is complete. Talking should be kept at a quiet level. If you are tardy, please enter quietly and gather materials. The instructor will take note and you will lose points off your daily grade.

Tuning Procedures

Students will use their own tuners to tune their instrument. As they are unpacking, they will clip the tuner to their music stand. When the timer is complete, students will begin tuning. After they are finished, the tuner will be clipped again to the music stand. At the end of the day, during pack up, students will return the tuners to their case. During tuning, the class is completely **SILENT!**

Listening Time & Written Work

During listening activities and written work, student instruments must be put down underneath or beside student chairs. Students should follow teacher instruction. Students should not talk out of turn and questions may be answered by raising hands. Students will not use their music stand as a desk, but use their orchestra folder as a hard surface for writing.

Rehearsal Time

During rehearsal, students should remain attentive and follow directions. Students should not talk out of turn and questions may be answered by raising hands. If the director is working with a section that is not your own, follow along with the questions being asked as it may also relate to your music. You may shadow bow or finger your own music, however, you may not play along or make noise unless directed. It is important that the classroom is quiet during rehearsal so the directors can hear the music to make necessary changes.

Passing out and Turning in

Music, assignments, and paperwork will be passed out and in through the section leader.

Late, missing, or incomplete assignments

Late assignments will be accepted but result in a grade drop after the due date (10%-Day 1, 20%-Day2, 30%-Day 3). Assignments will not be accepted after 3 days.

Absences

Students are responsible for all missed work in the case of an absence. Please ask the director for any missed work during unpack time or at the end of class. You have the same number of days to make up your work as the number of days you were absent.

Ending class

Students will be given time at the end of class to pack up their instruments before the bell rings. Talking should be kept to a quiet level. The teacher dismisses the students from class- not the bell.