

HERE ARE THE ANSWERS TO THE MOST ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT BEGINNER ORCHESTRA.

WHEN DOES THE ORCHESTRA CLASS MEET? WHAT INSTRUMENTS ARE STARTED?

Beginning orchestra meets as a regular class for 47 minutes at different times throughout the school day for the entire school year. Students are grouped into classes according to what instrument they play. Skills develop slowly at first, therefore, students and parents must be patient and committed for the entire school year in order to get the full benefit of orchestra instruction. Beginners are started on violin, viola, cello, & bass.

IS ANY PREVIOUS MUSICAL TRAINING NECESSARY?

No. The method books used in beginner orchestra are for the musically untrained student. We teach the fundamentals of reading music as well as the fundamentals of playing an instrument. As students progress, you will be able to recognize familiar tunes. Their progress culminates in a Spring Concert at the end of the year.

ARE CERTAIN INSTRUMENTS FOR GIRLS AND OTHERS FOR BOYS?

Definitely NOT! Instrument choices are not based on a student's gender, but rather their desire to play that instrument. Instrument selection is based primarily upon their personal choice of sound.

SHOULD I RENT OR PURCHASE AN INSTRUMENT?

RENT! Renting an instrument will give your child the opportunity to begin in an orchestra with only a small initial investment. Your child can have the advantages of a

brand new instrument, such as pride of ownership, freedom from error due to poor equipment, and the opportunity to be the best player they can be by having the best available instrument for their age level. Your child will have the instrument and materials recommended by the orchestra directors. The instrument can be returned to the company at any time without further obligation. All rent applies towards purchase.

WHAT ABOUT BUYING USED INSTRUMENTS?

Some used instruments are good bargains. However, you could possibly end up spending more money on repairs than the instrument is worth. For this reason, we ask that if you do purchase a used instrument, try to let a LTISD Orchestra Director examine it prior to purchase. Local music stores and former band students are excellent sources of used instruments. You might see if the music companies have used instruments available. We have found most pawn shop instruments to be of dubious quality. WARNING: The “orchestra instruments' ' listed in departments store (i.e. Amazon, Walmart), in my personal opinion, are JUNK! They are practically toys. The BCMS Orchestra program will not allow any Amazon, Sam’s Club, Sears, or Walmart instruments. Again, we recommend that you RENT an instrument the first year from a reputable music company.

ARE THERE ANY SCHOOL OWNED INSTRUMENTS AVAILABLE?

Yes. The school provides the more expensive instruments: bass. Parents whose child is selected to play one of these school owned instruments are required to pay a usage fee, and will still be required to purchase necessary accessories such as rosin, rockstop, tuner, & method books.

CAN MY CHILD PARTICIPATE IN BOTH ATHLETICS AND ORCHESTRA AT THE SAME TIME? ORCHESTRA AND CHOIR? BAND AND ORCHESTRA? ORCHESTRA & THEATER ARTS?

In 7th and 8th grade YES, but NOT in 6th grade. Athletics is not offered in the 6th grade. There are many middle school students who are in orchestra, athletics, and

other organizations such as theater arts, band, choir, etc. Because of the unique nature of playing a musical instrument, we try to encourage students to begin orchestra in 6th grade and then take other electives along with orchestra in their 7th & 8th grade years. In 7th grade & 8th grade, the school administration, coaches, classroom teachers and orchestra directors work together to try to avoid conflicts in scheduling. We have current BCMS Orchestra members who are also in 7th & 8th grade NJHS, Student Council, football, volleyball, basketball, math science team, cheerleading, and in school theater productions!

ARE THERE ANY EXTRA REHEARSALS REQUIRED? CONCERTS?

Beginners are required to attend only 4 concert performances their first year. We will also attend a Music Festival in October during school and the students will learn a solo in April. Other than these few performances & rehearsals prior to performance, there are NO after school responsibilities or activities.

WILL MY CHILD BE REQUIRED TO PRACTICE AT HOME?

Students are required as a part of their grade to practice 15-20 minutes every day outside of class. This time increases over the first semester as their finger & arm muscles develop and strengthen. Parents are encouraged to give positive support to the student as he/she progresses.

ARE PRIVATE LESSONS AVAILABLE? ARE THEY REQUIRED?

Private lessons are strongly encouraged for all students, but are not required. If your child takes private lessons, he/she will receive one-on-one instruction from a professional musician (many of which have graduate or doctoral degrees). I recommend that you enroll your child in private lessons in August.

Private lessons help challenge all students with additional materials and lead to individual competitions in the 7th-12th grade. Above average results are guaranteed if your student puts in the work!

MY CHILD HAS EXPERIENCE ALREADY. HOW DO I SIGN UP FOR MY CHILD FOR A HIGHER LEVEL?

Please send a video to your orchestra director and he/she will determine what level is appropriate for your child.

- Orchestra II JV level: Suzuki book 2
- Orchestra III Varsity level: Suzuki book 3 or higher



Instrument Try Out Dates (you can go to either one):

- April 2nd, Saturday, BCMS 9 am to noon
- April 23rd, Saturday, LTMS 9 am to noon
- Sign up for a slot at (scan the QR code):
https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/15467Qe6JkW5z57RP39tcO_rbDunafJj-LgkUDhlemlg/edit?usp=sharing

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS?

Please contact your orchestra director:

- Bee Cave MS & Lake Travis MS:
 - Mrs. Man May maym@ltidschools.org
- Hudson Bend MS:
 - Mr. Austin Leach leacha@ltidschools.org

More info at: <https://www.lthsorchestra.org/>

