

# **Orchestra Handbook**

## **DeWitt Perry MS**

**2020 - 2021**



**Eric Chui - Orchestra Director**  
**Tap McIntosh - Orchestra Director**

**See COVID-19 Addendum for brief highlights**

## **Introduction:**

This handbook will outline the policies and procedures for the DeWitt Perry MS Orchestra.

## **Purpose and Philosophy:**

The Orchestra program at DeWitt Perry Middle School is a cornerstone of the exceptional Fine Arts programs offered within the schools of CFB. Perry is known to be a school of excellence and the Orchestra program holds a high standard of excellence. As directors, our mission is to help your student embark on a musical journey that will hopefully be a seven year program of instruction that starts in middle school and continues in high school. Through the curriculum taught, we hope that your student will gain a better understanding and appreciation of music which will help add to their knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for success in their academic careers. Orchestra students will learn personal responsibility through practice and will learn to respect each other and themselves. Orchestra students learn the value of teamwork as well as healthy competition. The best orchestra is the one that supports the endeavors of its own members. Orchestra students also learn to have fun in a safe environment.

As a member of the DeWitt Perry Orchestra, you will be making a commitment that includes:

1. You have chosen Orchestra as an elective and it is expected that you are a member of the Orchestra for the entire school year. The Orchestra is a team and its success relies on balanced instrumentation. Your directors take time planning and considering the placement of each student to give you the best chance for success.
2. You will give your best effort both in the classroom and outside the classroom to improve as a musician. Success takes work and without work, you won't find success.
3. You will have and maintain a positive attitude throughout the school year. Through the highs and lows of life, we hope the Orchestra is a place where you can feel like you're part of our family.

## **Daily Procedures:**

1. Follow all CFB and DWP rules as stated in the student handbook.
2. Instruments go home daily - this is essential to establishing a good practice routine.
3. Fingernails must be kept trimmed in order for the student to properly play their instrument. Fingernails should not be visible behind the finger when looking at the palm of the hand. Artificial/acrylic nails are not allowed during the school year because it is impossible to play correctly with them on.
4. Teacher directions should be followed the first time they are given.
5. Always respect other students, adults, and instruments.
6. Play only your instrument. You are trained to play your instrument, not someone else's.
7. All equipment of the Orchestra should be well maintained and taken care of.
8. Director offices are off limits unless invited by the director. Always knock before entering (it's the polite way to do things).

## **CFBISD Grading Policy:**

Grades will be computed using the following system:

**75% Summative**—test grades. In orchestra, these include co-curricular performances, playing tests, and before and after-school rehearsals that coincide with orchestra class.

**25% Formative**—“daily” grades. In orchestra, these include playing quizzes, practice cards, and written assignments.

Detailed policies regarding grading can be found in the district handbook.

### **\*\*A WORD ON PERFORMANCES (subject to change due to COVID-19)**

Performing publicly is paramount to a successful music program. To that end, students must be present for all concerts and other performances to reap the benefits of orchestra membership. Attendance and participation at performances constitutes a major portion of a student's grade in orchestra class.

*Should a student miss a performance, the following excuses are **acceptable:***

- Sudden illness (must have a note from your parent)
- Family emergency
- Death in the family
- Religious obligation

*The following excuses are **NOT acceptable:***

- Overslept
- Out-of-school activity
- No ride (we will help you find a ride if you need one)
- Forgot
- Part of uniform missing

At any rate, we will ALWAYS listen if something prevented you from making a performance. Keep in mind, though, that performances are major grades and are part of our curriculum.

## **Orchestra Supplies:**

Supplies are necessary to play an instrument correctly and effectively each day. Please make sure your supplies are always at hand when needed.

1. Instrument, Bow and Rosin
2. Shoulder Rest (Violin and Viola)
  - a. Required for good posture and position
  - b. **Kun** brand collapsible shoulder rest is preferred. **Everest** is also a good choice.
  - c. Please ensure you get the right size shoulder rest for your instrument.
3. Rock Stop/Strap (Cello and Bass)
  - a. **Slip Stop** is the preferred brand.
4. Dry soft cloth
  - a. Clean cloth or part of an old clean T-shirt/sock
5. Music Binder with music and book
  - a. Beginners - Orchestra Expressions
  - b. Binder purchase is the responsibility of the student (Black, One Inch, with a clear front cover)
6. All students are expected to have a pencil available.

A list of reputable music companies for purchasing supplies can be obtained from Mr. Chui.

## **Instruments**

### **RENTED INSTRUMENTS VS. SCHOOL INSTRUMENT**

**“Rental/Rented instruments”** are instruments that are acquired through a non-district entity (music company). A contract is set up by the parents and a *monthly rental fee* is paid directly to the company. Information on companies that provide quality instrument rentals can be acquired from Mr. Chui.

\*This guarantees that the student will have their own instrument. (Best way for students to obtain an instrument)

**“School instruments”** are CFBISD District-Owned instruments that are made available to students whose families are financially unable to rent an instrument. An “Instrument Loan Agreement” (ILA) must be filled out, signed, and returned to the director before these instruments can be issued to students for personal use and home practice.

**ONCE AN ‘ILA’ HAS BEEN SIGNED, ANY DAMAGE TO THE INSTRUMENT WHILE IN THE POSSESSION OF THAT STUDENT OR FAMILY IS THEIR SOLE FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY.**

## **\*Uniform Expectations: (subject to change due to COVID-19)**

For performances, orchestra students have a uniform to wear. This helps the ensemble look professional and unifies the appearance of the performance. The following expectations are for their respective groups, unless otherwise specified. *Failure to wear the correct uniform to a concert will result in a point deduction in the performance grade.*

### **6th Grade**

- Orchestra T-shirt with khaki pants/slack and closed-toe black dress shoes
- “Sunday’s Best” for Spring Concert

### **Concert & Camerata**

#### **Ladies:**

- “Concert Black”-blouses, skirts, or dresses MUST be solid black
- Dress shoes, closed-toe
- Stockings, leggings and hosiery strongly recommended, must also be black

#### **Gentlemen:**

- Black dress pants with black belt
- All Black long-sleeved, button-down dress shirt
- Red Tie (provided by DWP)
- Black dress shoes w/ black socks

### **Philharmonic & Symphonic Orchestra**

#### **Ladies:**

- Black concert gown (provided by DWP) with black closed-toed dress shoes

#### **Gentlemen:**

- Black dress pants with black belt
- All black long-sleeved, button-down dress shirt
- Red Tie (provided by DWP)
- Black dress shoes w/ black socks

**\*All concert apparel must follow CFB dress code.**

**All-Region Orchestra** is made up of the finest middle school orchestra students from schools within Region 3I. Students audition in October for a chance to perform with one of two All-Region Orchestras. Making the All-Region is a prestigious accomplishment and your name goes into the history books both with All-Region as well as DWP. All Symphonic/Philharmonic Orchestra members are expected to learn the assigned music and make every effort to audition. \*Note due to COVID-19, the process for All-Region has changed. Auditions and judging will both occur online. There will **not** be a Clinic and Concert but students will still receive the All-Region patch and recognition for being selected as a member of the All-Region Orchestras.

**\*\*CFB Solo and Ensemble Contest** is held annually each spring. This contest provides the students with an opportunity to perform a solo and/or ensemble and receive a rating/evaluation of their performance. The cost of this competition is already included in the Orchestra activity fee.

**\*\*Music Festivals** are held annually in the Spring. All Beginner/Philharmonic/Symphonic students will participate in a music festival. Competition at a music festival allows our students to play in a particular venue and receive evaluation from expert judges in the field of Orchestra. A portion of the cost of these trips is offset with the Orchestra activity fees. Further details will be communicated in the Spring.

**Private lessons** are optional and offered during the school day. Forms are available for students to sign-up and be placed with a private teacher. The district regulates the cost of one-on-one private lessons at \$20.00 per 1/2 hour.

Private teachers are paid directly by students and may discontinue lessons at their discretion if unpaid. Participants take one 1/2 hour lesson once a week. All private teachers have been screened by the district personnel office and backgrounds have been thoroughly checked for your child's safety. The private lesson staff is comprised of well-qualified professionals and college students in the DFW area.

Students who take private lessons tend to gain a greater mastery of the music and material. One-on-one instruction is very beneficial and can help students achieve greater goals in orchestra. Students wishing to move faster/ahead of the class should be involved in lessons.

The Aiming Higher Program includes funds that are designated to help out students who may need assistance in paying for private lessons. There is a scholarship form that needs to be completed to qualify for these funds. If you are interested in applying for a scholarship, please see Mr. Chui to receive a form.

Partial scholarships are available from the Orchestra Booster Club to help defray the cost of private lessons. The more successful the booster club is with its fundraising and membership, the more scholarship money it can offer. If you are interested in private lessons but have concerns about the cost, please contact Mr. Chui.

2020-2021 - Private lessons are available online virtually with the teacher. No in person lessons will occur until further notice. Spaces are limited, so sign up if you are interested.