

*Cy-fair* HIGH SCHOOL  
**ORCHESTRA**



2022-2023 Handbook



# Orchestra Handbook

**2022 - 2023**

## **Teaching Staff and Administration**

Director of Cy-Fair Orchestras: Lacey Thwing  
CFISD Director of Fine Arts: John Morrison  
Cy-Fair High School Principal: Ana Martin

## **Cy-Fair Orchestra Officers**

President: Phillip Tran  
Vice-Presidents: Alexa Midamba, Aishu Shanmugam, and Thai-Hien Tran  
Secretary: Eveline Wong  
Historians: Sophia Nguyen and Itzel Cubias  
Librarians: Kanai Bepary, Pablo MacKay, and Catherine Phan  
Equipment Managers: Alexa Frias, Leila Gonzalez, and Grace Ta

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# CY-FAIR HIGH SCHOOL ORCHESTRA HANDBOOK

This handbook contains organizational information for the orchestra members and their parents. To understand the basic operational procedures for the current school year, students and parents should be familiar with the contents of this handbook. If questions should arise, please contact the orchestra director to explain specific points.

## PURPOSE

The fundamental purpose of the Cy-Fair High School Orchestra is to provide students with the opportunity to increase their love and understanding of music and to increase their competencies as performers.

## CY-FAIR ORCHESTRAS

This year, the Cy-Fair Orchestra is being divided into four string orchestras. The orchestras will be called **Chamber (2nd Period), Symphony (3rd Period), Philharmonic (6th Period), and Camerata (7th Period)**. Additionally, Chamber and other auditioned members will be combined with wind players to form the **Full Orchestra**, which will begin rehearsing in the Spring.

Placement into the orchestras occurs by audition in the previous spring semester, consisting of scales, a prepared piece, and a brief excerpt chosen by your directors. In addition to the audition, *citizenship, conduct, and grades* are large factors in your directors' final decision in determining personnel.

## RESPONSIBILITY OF THE INDIVIDUAL

Each orchestra member should be willing to accept the following personal and individual responsibilities:

1. The student should devote time each week toward musical progress and development of orchestral techniques that include regular home practice and some after school practice. Private lessons and attendance at concerts of other musical groups (e.g., Houston Symphony, university orchestras, choir or band) are highly encouraged.
2. The student must be responsible for the music issued and will be required to replace any lost or severely damaged music.
3. A student's instrument should be inspected regularly, checked for possible problems, and maintained properly. Repairs should be taken care of quickly, including replacement of faulty strings, bridges, bow hair, etc.
4. Students are expected to attend all orchestra rehearsals and performances unless excused **in advance** by their director. A written excuse must be given

in order to be considered for an excused absence. Otherwise, the absence will result in a lower grade.

5. Help build and maintain the high standards for a successful orchestra by doing your part. This includes being on time, preparing the music, and helping other students by working together to solve problems.

## CLASSROOM RULES

Classroom rules are designed to be simple and easy to follow. They are effective in keeping order during classes and rehearsals only when each member of the orchestra chooses to follow them. They are:

- When the director is ready to start tuning, be in your seat with your instrument ready to play and with your **music notebook, pencil** and any other necessary equipment at your seat.
- **Everyone** must have their music at their seat every day.
- Respect the property of other individuals. This includes instruments, music, and the room. You do not have permission to use anyone else's materials. Please do not assume that you do.
- Food and drinks are **not** allowed in the rooms. (Water with a lid is allowed)
- Be courteous to everyone in the room – that includes when and how you talk.
- Do not leave items in the orchestra room. They will be placed in the lost and found box for a week and then donated or discarded.
- You may not wait in the orchestra room during sectional rehearsals.
- Students are not allowed in the orchestra office unless given express permission by the orchestra director.

There will be several opportunities for the orchestra members to participate in off-campus activities, both during the school day as well as after school. Students who are not able to follow these rules consistently will jeopardize their opportunity to participate in these events.

## TESTS AND EXAMS

Periodic evaluation will be made through written or playing tests. The tests will be given every two weeks or as needed during the performance preparation process. The playing test may be live or recorded at the discretion of the director.

## GRADES

Each student gains points based upon the following scale. At the end of each grading period, points awarded are divided into the points available to compute the average. Extra credit may be available for students who have a non-passing grade up to and before the end of a concert cycle.

Mastery of skills is the goal and grading will be determined by the following criteria:

- |                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| 1. Quality of performance | 4. Daily participation                       |
| 2. Knowledge of music     | 5. Attendance at all rehearsals and concerts |
| 3. Daily preparation      |  |

- |  |                          |
|--|--------------------------|
| 6. Testing                                 | 8. Conduct and attitude  |
| 7. Participation in auditions and contests | 9. Written examinations  |
|  | 10. Playing examinations |

*Table of grade points*

ACTIVITY	POINTS
Class Participation and Conduct (This grade includes promptness, having instrument, pencil, music, and other necessary equipment, etc.)	20 per day weekly = 100
Concerts and performances (This includes the uniform grade)	100 each
Rehearsals and sectionals	100 each
Tests (Playing and Written)	100 each
Semester Exams (Written in Fall/ Tryout in Spring)	100 points

Students are encouraged to check with the director at any time regarding the status of his/her grade. Additionally, grades will be posted in Schoology regularly.

**CFISD Grade Percentage Breakdown (25%, 35%, 40%)**

25% - Participation

35% - Performance checks, Sectionals

40% - Playing tests, Concerts

**(Important!** Please note that concerts count as major grades, up to 40% of any **grading period total.**)

**MUSIC**

All music performed by the Cy-Fair Orchestra will be provided by the school district. The student will usually provide any music used for solo or ensemble purposes. When originals are used, they will remain property of the Cy-Fair Orchestra. Students are expected to take good care of all music. Markings should be made in soft lead pencil, only. Originals will be collected during the first class following a performance. Music needs to be kept in a black binder.

Each student is expected to have his or her own personal copy of the music at every class and/or rehearsal. Even when a stand partner's copy of the music is being used, assume that if your stand partner's music is marked, yours will be as well. Furthermore, do not assume that you will remember them next time.

Everyone needs to mark his/her music. From time to time, there will be an **unannounced grade** given for this. This grade makes up part of your class participation grade. If this grade is taken more than once in a grading cycle the subsequent grades will count as a Major grade.

**ATTENDANCE**

Orchestra activities are planned so that the fewest other activities will conflict. All students are encouraged to participate in as many social or optional activities as they wish, but at the same time, orchestra members are expected to participate in all required orchestra events, rehearsals, and performances, remembering that a grade is given for each required event.

**IMPORTANT:** In The event of a conflict, the student has the responsibility of communicating stating the reason for the conflict. **Notes must be received before the missed event.** This note does not automatically excuse an absence. Each case will be considered individually and dealt with privately according to its circumstances.

**All absences, whether excused or unexcused, must be made up.** Only excused absences will be given full credit. Last minute excuses cause problems in scheduling and may not be excused. The only exception would be a student illness or death in the family. **Not having a ride to an orchestra function does not qualify a student for an excused absence.** If this occurs, please try to get a ride from another student. As a last resort, call the orchestra office. Please make an effort to make sure that you have reliable pre-arranged transportation to all activities. **Note:** the attendance guidelines do not apply to social events.

## **EXTRA PERFORMANCES**

On occasion requests are made to have only part of the orchestra perform at a certain event. Rules of attendance apply the same for these events as for others.

## **AFTER-SCHOOL REHEARSALS**

Occasionally, it may be necessary to rehearse outside of school hours. These rehearsals will be announced at least two weeks in advance. It is necessary that all students attend these rehearsals. **Students who are not present and ready to play on time will lose points in their grade.** As the budget allows, we will also schedule guest clinicians to come in and work with the group.

To make last minute adjustments and preparations for concerts, the orchestra may have scheduled **dress rehearsals**. It is not necessary to wear uniforms to these rehearsals even though they are called dress, a final run-through of the music will be a large part of this time. Again, these are required functions.

## **SECTION REHEARSALS**

Section rehearsals, or sectionals, will be held, usually directly before school or directly after school in preparation for the major concerts – Honor Orchestra taping concert, UIL concert, etc. This is an opportunity for each section to work on their music as a section, highlighting specific problems in their music and inherent to their instrument. The members of each section, according to their personal schedules, determine the time for sectionals. All section members will have input on this decision-making process. Sectional times are on a first-come first-serve basis. Therefore, the faster you decide on a day and time, the more likely your time will be available.

## **PRACTICE**

Individual home practice is an integral part of any musician's learning process. It is very important to the state of the orchestra that effort is being made by each student to be responsible for learning individual parts outside of the classroom.

Ideally, class meetings and rehearsals are not to be used as a practice session, but as time for working out ensemble concerns.

The Cy-Fair Orchestra is a great orchestra because of the quality teaching you have received in the early years of your musical education. It becomes a superior orchestra when all its members put hard work into it. If there is a problem in the music that you cannot handle, please talk to your conductor. If he/she cannot help you, he/she will find someone who can.

## **EXTRA CURRICULAR COMPETITIONS**

All students are encouraged to participate in competitions outside the scope of the classroom experience. The Cy-Fair Orchestra has been represented well in these types of contests, and has enjoyed the successes of individual as well as collective performances.

There are several concerto competitions in the area as well as an opportunity to compete at the state level through UIL solo and ensemble. Also, TMEA (Texas Music Educators Association) sponsors auditions for the Region 27 and All-State Orchestras.

Being extra-curricular activities, the events outlined in this section cannot be considered in determining a student's grade. Students will not receive extra grade points for participation in any of these activities. Furthermore, participation in any of these events cannot interfere with any work that is required for the class. Students desiring extra help in preparing for these events should see your director to schedule an appointment.

## **PRIVATE LESSONS**

Students are strongly encouraged to take private lessons. Information sheets with phone numbers are available upon request as well as information found on our website. In an orchestra program this large, it is virtually impossible to meet the individual needs of each student. With private lessons, participating students can have the luxury of extra help on orchestral literature and instrument technique sessions on a one-to-one basis. Lesson locations may include Cy-Fair, Arnold, Hamilton, a private teacher's home, or other district location. If you do not have a private teacher and are interested in beginning lessons, please contact one of these approved teachers or speak with your director by email.

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

### Full Orchestra

The full or symphony orchestra is a combination of the best players from the band and the orchestra. Membership is achieved by audition and provides the opportunity to play and perform a variety of great and popular orchestra literature. Since most of the time this orchestra meets is after school hours, attendance at rehearsals is required.



### Chamber Orchestra

The Chamber Orchestra is a select group of the most proficient, musically advanced string players. *Though not required, taking private lessons will be encouraged.* Membership is by audition with the understanding that this organization demands more time for rehearsals and performances. Traditional orchestral music as well as popular arrangements will be learned and performed at concerts and contests.

### Symphony Orchestra

The Symphony Orchestra is also a select group of advanced players. Membership is by audition with the understanding that this organization demands more time for rehearsals and performances. Traditional orchestra music as well as popular arrangements will be learned and performed at concerts and contests.

### Philharmonic Orchestra

The Philharmonic Orchestra is the third orchestra. Membership in this orchestra is gained through audition in the spring. Traditional orchestral music as well as popular arrangements will be learned and performed at concerts and contests.

### Camerata Orchestra

The Camerata Orchestra is designed for students to acquire, refine, and expand foundation skills on their instrument and apply them toward solid, string orchestra literature. Traditional orchestral music as well as popular arrangements will be learned and performed at concerts and contests.

### All Region and All State Orchestras

All Chamber and Symphony orchestra members are ***strongly*** encouraged to audition for All Region. (All Region audition material is the Texas All State etude requirement). Since learning the etudes is co-curricular and the audition serves as the final assessment, students in these two orchestras who are not auditioning may be required to perform the cuts after the audition for a grade. Those students who have private lessons and extra self-discipline are encouraged to try out for All State. (The material is similar with the addition of four musical excerpts.)

### Equipment

All instruments are to be in good playing condition. Proper maintenance is required. Students are to have proper shoulder rests, rock stops and rags. Students are to have a pencil on their stands at every rehearsal.

## Letter Jackets (District Policy FG Local)

Sophomore, junior, and senior students may only receive one school-purchased award jacket during their high school careers at the same school. Freshmen are excluded with the exception of those who earn 10 or more points toward sweepstakes in district UIL or music competition. If a student becomes eligible for an additional letter, a suitable recognition patch or stripe will be made available for the student to indicate that he has achieved this recognition more than once. Seniors may elect to receive a blanket or other similar standardized award if this is the first year they are eligible for an award jacket.

### **General Requirements**

To receive an award jacket or to letter, students must be members of a student organization that actively participates in interscholastic competition and/or drill team activities and remain in good standing for the entire school year. Students must demonstrate a positive attitude and maintain a satisfactory citizenship/conduct and scholarship average. Students must attend all functions and activities of the organization or subgroups unless excused by the coaches/director/sponsor. See board policy FG Local

### **Music Requirements**

Earn a minimum of eight achievement and/or participation points. Achievement points do not accumulate or carry over from year to year and may be earned as follows:

- 4 points for achieving membership through audition in a performing all-region band, choir, orchestra, or jazz bandw
- 2 points for achieving membership through audition in the ninth-grade all-region band
- 4 points for advancing to the area level audition in band, choir, or strings
- 2 points for achieving membership in all-state band, orchestra, or choir
- 3 points for achieving an excellent rating on a class I or II solo at the solo and ensemble contest.
- 3 points for achieving an excellent rating on a class I or II ensemble at the solo and ensemble festival. *\*(Only two solo and/or ensemble events may be counted toward lettering in a single year.)*

Participation points for band, orchestra, and choir members will accumulate or carry over from year to year and may be earned as follows:

- 2 points at the beginning of the second year of participation in a competing organization
- 3 points at the beginning of the third year of participation in a competing organization
- 4 points at the beginning of the fourth year of participation in a competing organization, contingent upon the student remaining a member of the organization for his/her entire senior year under the conditions stated in A, B, & C, above.

A student who is ineligible for any extracurricular activities during the year will forfeit participation points for that year.

## Uniforms

- A. If the Dress Uniform is checked out to a member, he/she is responsible for its cleaning and upkeep.
- B. Each member is required to pay (part of activity fee) for any necessary alterations made to his/her uniform. The uniform must NEVER be cut on.
- C. Good care and use of the uniform will be evident at each inspection prior to performance. Each member must see to it that his/her uniform is cleaned only by an approved method of cleaning.
- D. Damage to any part of the school-issued uniform will be paid for by the student. Any disrespect or misuse of the uniform will result in the possible suspension from the orchestra.
- E. Proper, polite behavior and good manners are to be always expected of any member in uniform.

## Group Behavior

- A. On every bus trip, members will go and return with the group.
- B. Members will be assigned buses, but may select their own seats: each member must remain in that seat once we start traveling.
- C. Members may not move around on the bus.
- D. Each member must be seated for bus roll call.
- E. No loud noises or horseplay.
- F. When the director stands at the front of the bus, all talking ceases.
- G. Your arms and hands are never outside the bus.
- H. There will be only bottled drinks on the bus. The only time members may bring food is when the driver gives permission to do so.
- I. Members must show respect for the director, sponsors, officers in charge and the bus driver.
- J. Members will be expected to follow all school district policies when traveling or representing the Cy-Fair High School Orchestra.

District policy regarding behavior:

With the approval of the principal and Superintendent, sponsors and coaches of extracurricular activities may develop and enforce standards of behavior that are higher than the District-developed Student Code of Conduct and may condition membership or participation in the activity on adherence to those standards. Extracurricular standards of behavior may take into consideration conduct that occurs at any time, on or off school property. A student shall be informed of any extracurricular behavior standards at the beginning of each school year or when the student first begins participation in the activity. A student and his or her parent shall sign and return to the sponsor or coach a statement that they have read the extracurricular behavior standards and consent to them as a condition of participation in the activity. Standards of behavior for an extracurricular activity are independent of the Student Code of Conduct. Violations of these standards of behavior that are also violations of the Student Code of Conduct may result in independent disciplinary actions. A student may be removed from participation in extracurricular activities or may be excluded from school honors for violation of extracurricular standards of behavior for an activity or for violation of the Student Code of Conduct.

## UNIFORM REQUIREMENTS

Dress Uniform for all orchestras:

Tuxedo and tie furnished by school and Black socks, black dress shoes, and white dress shirt.

-or-

Dress furnished by school and Black dress shoes.

Informal uniform:

Orchestra shirts, **blue jeans**, and dark shoes (no sandals)

**Everyone must have an orchestra t-shirt.** (also included in the Activity fee) It will be worn on spirit days, when traveling and for casual performances.

## OUT-OF-TOWN TRIPS

Each year during the spring, the Cy-Fair Orchestra sponsors a trip to an out-of-town destination. The staff and officers of the Cy-Fair Orchestra are committed to pursuing more of these trips this year and in the future.

All trips are approved by the administration of Cy-Fair High School as well as the CFISD school board. All precautions are taken to ensure the safety of all participants. Orchestra policy is that there will be at least one chaperone for every ten students on the trip.

As the trip approaches, a detailed itinerary, a list of rules and policies and a permission slip is distributed to all students and parents. The opportunity for parents to participate on the trip as chaperones will be available by the Fall Concert in October.

*At the beginning of the school year, a payment schedule is given out. A student may opt out of a trip once he or she has started making payments up to 60 days prior to the start of the trip. However, if the student opts out of a trip after making the initial payment he/she will lose the initial commitment payment. After the sixty-day deadline, the student may still withdraw; however, he/she is responsible for paying for the trip and may not receive a full refund on the trip. In addition, refunds may not be considered for those who are forced to withdraw due to ineligibility. **Note: Any refunds due will not be returned until the trip has concluded and a full accounting has been done.***

## FUNDRAISING

To fund large trips, fund raising activities will be organized for the students. All orchestra students are strongly encouraged to participate in some manner in the fundraisers. Some students are financially capable of paying for the trip on their own, but we feel that the trip will be a lot more valuable to the student if some effort is made by the student to pay for the trip. The opportunity for parents to participate in the Finance Committee will be available at the first concert of the year.

## **ELIGIBILITY**

It is **very** important that each student maintain passing grades in all classes in addition to orchestra. Many orchestra activities are co-curricular. However, any student who is not passing a class will be ineligible for a three-week period. If at the end of that time, the student is passing **all** classes, eligibility will be restored. If you are having trouble passing a class, please notify your director. He/she can try to get you extra help, if not from a teacher, maybe from a fellow student. We expect members of the Cy-Fair Orchestra to do all the work necessary to pass all their classes.

## ***OFFICERS and ORCHESTRA COUNCIL***

It is the duty of all officers to be ambitious, determined, and to maintain pride in self and in the organization. An officer must learn everything expected of the organization, cooperate with the directors and with the other officers, and maintain a sense of responsibility for the organization. He/she must wear the Cy-Fair High School Orchestra uniform with pride.

Each officer must always be a good representative of the orchestra and be the finest example of the ideal Cy-Fair High School Orchestra member. He/she should be positive and sincere, be committed to scholarship, and be able work with others for the benefit of the organization. He/she must set high standards and always work to perfect his/her level of performance and ability in whatever he/she does.

## **Offices :**

**President** - The President is the top-ranking officer of the orchestra. He/she will perform all duties assigned to him/her. Such duties include, but are not limited to, organizing and presiding at business/Council meetings, supervise the duties of other officers, work directly with the directors/parents in fund raising projects and trip plans; take charge of program and arrangements for the orchestra banquet; act as a master of ceremonies at the orchestra banquet.

**Vice-President(s)** - The duty of the Vice-President(s) is to assume the duties of the president in his/her absence, take charge of orchestra newsletter, aid in assembling committees and appointing chairpersons; assist the president when called upon, and be responsible for keeping records.

**Secretary** - The duty of the Secretary is to check and verify attendance at rehearsals along with the President, write thank you notes and letters, (or remind the directors to do so) post notices on the bulletin board, and create and keep a calendar of the year's events. Phone, text, or email members that are absent or tardy from rehearsals or activities.

**Historian** - The Historian is to report all news events to the local and school papers, assist directors and yearbook editor with plans for yearbook pictures and

information, serve as a chairperson of all publicity for the orchestra, keep a file of all pictures, news items, programs, etc. for a scrapbook and assemble it to be displayed at the banquet, have orchestra events put on the billboard, take pictures at all events.

**Artistic Director** - The Artistic Director serves as the creative eye for the orchestra. This person should be skilled in drawing or graphic design. This position works with the other officers to design the posters, t-shirts, posters, etc.

**Director's Assistants** - Duties include stamping, numbering, cataloguing and filing new/old music, distribute and collect music, put music in order and check for missing and damaged parts, get extra copies of music as needed, keep a list of students who have lost or damaged music, keep music files in order, type cards for new music or enter data into the computer database.

**Equipment Managers and Uniform Managers** - Duties are to assist director/parents in checking in and out of uniforms, supervise setting up of rehearsal room for full orchestra and stage for concerts or rehearsals, organize moving equipment for public performances off campus, take charge of loading instruments on buses, have instrument checks during year to maintain good working condition.

### **Orchestra Council :**

All the officers comprise the orchestra council and are responsible for discussing business, formulating plans and generating ideas for the betterment of the Orchestra. Council members are required to attend regular council meetings. All major plans must be approved by the director and may be voted on by the full orchestra.