



# **ARLINGTON HIGH SCHOOL**

## **ORCHESTRA**

### **HANDBOOK**

**2011-2012**

**[www.ahsorchestra.com](http://www.ahsorchestra.com)**

**Orchestra office: (682)-867-6515**

**Ms. Linda Keefer   Mr. Toby Jones   Mr. Jeff Harvick**

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Dear AHS Orchestra Students and Parents:

Welcome to the 2011-2012 school year! We are excited and looking forward to another wonderful year with our students and families.

Ms. Keefer, Mr. Jones and Mr. Harvick are pleased to welcome back returning students and incoming freshmen to the AHS Orchestra. We are excited about the opportunities students will have as our program continues to grow and achieve.

Mr. Harvick graduated from AHS in 2005 and was the orchestra president his senior year. Jeff received Bachelor of Music Education and Bachelor of Music Performance degrees from University of North Texas. He is entering his third year of teaching at AHS. Mr. Harvick is the director of the Sinfonia and Concert Orchestras.

Mr. Jones has been an assistant director at AHS since 2003. He earned his Bachelor of Music Education degree from Texas Christian University where he was principal trumpet in the TCU symphony and Jazz Ensemble. Mr. Jones is the director of the Philharmonic and Philharmonia Orchestras. He is also the proud papa of Grace Elisabeth Jones and Olivia Ruth Jones.

Ms. Keefer has been the orchestra director at AHS since 1976. Since then, the orchestra program has grown from eleven students to over 250. The AHS Symphony, under Ms. Keefer's direction, is recognized statewide. They have received sweepstakes at UIL every year since 1979, and have been selected as a statewide Honor Orchestra finalist multiple times. Ms. Keefer is also the director of the AHS Chamber and Chaconne orchestras.

AHS is proud of the fact that we currently have seven orchestras, providing opportunities for students of all levels to participate. In addition to rehearsal and concerts, participation in all of the orchestra activities, especially the spring trip, is encouraged.

The Arlington High School Orchestra is blessed to have an outstanding booster club!! Our program includes some of the most supportive and involved parents in town. We encourage you to become active in this organization by getting to know the parents, students, and directors and attending booster club meetings. These meetings will also help provide important information about the activities and projects in progress and how you can help.

Effective communication between students, parents, and directors is an important part of our success. It will take all of us working together to build and maintain a quality program. We encourage parents and students to check the AHS orchestra website, [www.ahsorchestra.com](http://www.ahsorchestra.com) for pertinent, up-to-date information.

**Please take time to study this handbook.** Each year there are a few changes made to improve your child's orchestra experience.

Sincerely,

Linda Keefer  
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## **Membership Requirements and Placement**

Membership in the AHS Orchestra Program is available to any student who has previously played violin, viola, cello, string bass or harp. Students will be placed in a performing group according to their performance ability, academic performance and conduct as determined by the director. All students who wish to be in Symphony, including students currently enrolled in Symphony, will be required to audition each semester. Students who are enrolled in orchestra as their parent organization may also be given the opportunity to join additional ensemble groups such as Chamber orchestra, Choir, Jazz Band, Marching Band etc. However, if a student chooses to terminate his/her membership in their parent orchestra for any reason at any time, their membership in any additional ensembles will be terminated. A student may not be allowed to drop their parent organization to join another organization during the same school year.

## **Instruments**

All students must furnish their own instrument in good playing condition, equipped with a **name tag**. School owned cellos and basses are available for rental on a need basis. Any student who uses a school owned bass or cello both at school and home must pay a rental fee of \$150.00. If you own or rent an instrument from a music store, but still wish to use a school instrument for rehearsals, you are required to pay a prorated fee of \$75.00. School cellos are limited. This fee will be due **September 12th and 13th**. If you need to make payment arrangements, please contact a director ASAP. We will be happy to work with your situation. We strongly encourage everyone to insure **ALL** instruments, including school owned instruments, as you will be held responsible for any damage incurred.

## **School Harp**

Any orchestra student interested in learning to play harp is encouraged to sign up! We have an outstanding harp teacher at AHS who is committed to expanding our successful harp program. Private lessons on the harp will be available through the **AMEP** program (See Private Lessons). Students would be required to take harp lessons during class, and practice at school outside of class. If you are interested in taking advantage of this opportunity, please contact one of the orchestra directors immediately to get signed up!!

## **Spring Orchestra Trip**

Every student will be offered the opportunity to participate in the spring orchestra trip. The destination and cost will be officially announced soon. **Students must be academically eligible at the time of the trip.** Keep in mind that participation in extracurricular events off campus is a privilege and that eligibility to participate in such events is at the discretion of the director and the AISD code of conduct.

# Performance Uniforms

**ALL STUDENTS** - will be issued a concert uniform. They will need to provide their own black dress shoes (not tennis shoes) and black hose or socks. Uniforms will be worn for all performances unless otherwise instructed by the director. Uniforms must be worn properly. Hair accessories such as bows or hair clips must be black.

**Boys** – Will be issued a Jacket, Pants, Tuxedo Shirt, Cummerbund and Bowtie along with a garment bag. Boys will be required to turn in the Jacket, Pants, Shirt and garment bag at the end of the year. **\*\*Cummerbunds and Bowties are issued to Freshmen and new students only.\*\*** All returning students should have kept their cummerbund and bowtie. Replacements for a bowtie or a cummerbund are available for a \$5.00 fee.

**Girls** – Will be issued a concert black dress. Dresses may be machine washed by following the tag instructions. Girls will be required to turn in the dress clean at the end of the year. **ALL DRESSES MUST BE HEMMED. DO NOT CUT. DO NOT USE TAPE.**

**Uniforms must be cleaned regularly after each performance in order to maintain the quality of the uniform. Any uniform returned with damage including tears, burns, or odors will be charged the current replacement cost of the uniform.**

All students must check out uniforms on one of these two dates.

**Monday: September 12 6:00 – 8:00pm**

OR

**Tuesday: September 13 6:00 – 8:00pm**

# Money

Any money collected must be turned in either by Check or Money Order only and made payable to “**AHS ORCHESTRA**”. Please do not send cash. All money must be placed in a district issued collection envelope before it will be accepted. These envelopes are available in the orchestra office and one is included in your packet.

## Activity Fee (\$50.00)

All students will pay an Activity Fee of \$50.00 and will be due at the time of one of the uniform checkout nights. This fee will cover uniform usage, orchestra t-shirt, contest fees, UIL fees, picture sitting fee, and music.

## String Purchases

Throughout the year, your child may have a string break or need some other music supply. We are privileged to have several music representatives come to the school regularly to supply needs of our program at minimal cost. Strings, rosin, and other supplies may be purchased in the orchestra hall.

**Should any financial requirement made by the AHS orchestra create a hardship, please contact a director so other options may be discussed. We will be happy to work with your situation.**

## **Citizenship Expectations for Orchestra Students**

Each student will begin the Six Weeks grading period with a citizenship grade of an A.

Adjustments to this grade will be calculated as follows:

Failure to comply with classroom rules = deduction of (5) points from the citizenship grade.

Parental contact may be made by phone, e-mail, or letter when a student falls below an (A-) average in citizenship.

## **Orchestra Concert Etiquette Expectations**

Orchestra concerts are not designed to be a “come and go” affair. Students are expected to attend each **entire** concert as part of their performance requirement. Parents please make arrangements to attend the **entire** concert. Please do not attend just your child’s portion of the concert and then leave. It is important that parents model proper concert etiquette along with their student.

## **AHS ORCHESTRA CLASSROOM RULES**

1.) Every student is expected to rehearse in a professional and positive manner on a daily basis. Respect for the director and other students is expected at all times. Excessive behavior that disturbs the learning process is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. This includes talking excessively, throwing objects, etc.

2.) Students must be seated ready to rehearse when the tardy bell rings. Students who are not prepared at that time will be marked tardy.

3.) Students are to remain in the orchestra hall until dismissed by the director.

4.) Students are expected to maintain their fingernails and keep them short for optimal playing ability. Any synthetic nails **MUST** be kept short and maintained.

**It is up to the sole discretion of the directors to determine fingernail length and shape as being acceptable for optimal playing condition.**

5.) Students are expected to be responsible and meet deadlines as requested by the directors. Failure to meet deadlines for returning forms, information requests, etc. will result in 5 points deducted from the citizenship grade.

## Academic Grade

A student's six weeks grade is made up of two main categories, which total 100 points.

- 70% TEKS (Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills) Daily objective mastery
- 30% Playing Tests and Exams. i.e. tape tests, in-class tests, written exams

### **NO EXTRA CREDIT OF ANY KIND WILL BE ACCEPTED**

Adjustments to this grade will be calculated as follows:

- Failure of daily mastery of TEKS objectives (-3 pts. per day)  
i.e. Professional rehearsal techniques, positive attitude, fingernails Etc.
- Failure to provide needed supplies i.e. instrument in good playing condition, music, pencil (-10 points per day)
- Failure to turn in tape tests on time. (up to -30 pts)  
**NO TAPE TESTS WILL BE ACCEPTED LATE**
- Unexcused absence from an extra rehearsal (-10 pts)
- Unexcused absence from a performance (-30 pts)

## Tests

Students will be tested on a regular basis in one of the following ways as determined by the director:

- Live in-class tests for a director  
Students will play live for a director and will be evaluated and ranked within their section
- In-class recorded test  
Students will play live using a recording device during class. Students will have **one** chance to record their test.
- At-home recorded test  
Students will be required to record excerpts on a computer and uploaded on the Charms website by the due date. (Instructions on how to do this will be abundantly available.) No tests will be accepted late!

### Test evaluation system example:

#### Test breakdown:

<u>Scale</u>	<u>Points</u>
90 – 100	10
80 – 89	7
70 – 79	5
0 – 69	0

Example: Test 1 (Scale 92 = Points 10)

Example: Test 2 (Scale 84 = Points 7)

Example: Test 3 (Scale 88 = Points 7)

Example: Sub Total test points = (24)

Example: Sub Total TEKS points = (70)

**Example: Six Weeks Grade = (94)**

Substantial improvement or lack thereof on any test may result in a reevaluation of a student's orchestra placement throughout the year.

## Attendance

**Absences from concert performances will only be excused in the event of a student's illness or unavoidable family emergency.** The director must be notified ASAP in writing by filling out a "Request for Excused Absence Form". Ms. Keefer, Mr. Jones or Mr. Harvick will sign the written notification verifying the absence as excused. It is up to the sole discretion of the director to excuse or not excuse an absence.

**\*\*\* Birthday celebrations, transportation problems, school social events, etc. will not be excused.**

In order for a student to be excused from any extra rehearsal or performance, he/she must fill out a "Request for Excused Absence Form" available in the Orchestra office. Failure to do this will result in their academic grade being affected and NO EXTRA CREDIT will be accepted to repair the grade. **A form signed by the director is required for each and every rehearsal missed to avoid loss of credit. Do not assume that the director "already knows" of your conflict.**

### **ABSENCES SUBJECT TO BEING EXCUSED:**

- 1.) Other School Activities when notified well in advance**
- 2.) At School Tutoring with Academic Teachers**  
(Only if that session cannot be scheduled at any other time – including LUNCH. A signature from that classroom teacher will be required on the form.)
- 3.) Student Illness** (Written notification required from parent)

### **UNEXCUSED ABSENCES: Check your calendar and plan ahead.**

- 1.) Doctor, Dentist, & Orthodontist appointments which are NOT emergencies.**
- 2.) D-Hall** Follow school rules at all times (including tardy policies) and avoid d-hall assignments.
- 3.) Transportation problems** – either yours or someone else's. Plan ahead.

**Do not assume that an absence will or will not be excused. Students are expected to follow the stated guidelines and procedures according to the attendance policy. Failure to follow such guidelines will render any absence inexcusable and the grade will be affected.**

## Practice Expectations

As the level of expectations increase, so does the expectation to practice. The student is required to adequately prepare his/her music to the level of expectation expected by the teacher. **Practice time is necessary for the student's success as well as the success of the AHS Orchestra program.** It is up to the discretion of the director to reevaluate a student's placement based on evidence that a student clearly has not adequately prepared on their instrument.

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_

Orchestra \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher \_\_\_\_\_

**PARENT/STUDENT AGREEMENT FORM**

**(Due by Uniform Checkout night)**

**Monday, September 12<sup>th</sup>**

**Tuesday, September 13<sup>th</sup>**

Please sign and return this from by the due date.

I have read all the guidelines for the Arlington High School Orchestra and agree to abide by all the policies stated. I realize that it takes full cooperation, and a willingness to make sacrifices and dedication from 100% of the students to make my experience in orchestra the best it can be.

I have read the policies of the AHS Orchestra and agree to support all the policies stated therein.

Student signature \_\_\_\_\_

Student ID# \_\_\_\_\_

Parent signature \_\_\_\_\_

Parent signature \_\_\_\_\_