

**HIGHLAND PARK HIGH SCHOOL
HIGHLAND PARK ORCHESTRAS
2023-2024 STUDENT HANDBOOK**

This handbook is provided to help you understand the rules and procedures under which the Highland Park Orchestras organization will operate. My goal is that the contents of this handbook will make your experience in the Highland Park Orchestras as beneficial and enjoyable as possible.

INTRODUCTION

Congratulations! You are a member of the Highland Park High School Orchestra program. As part of the Highland Park Orchestra, you are part of one of the most outstanding high school music programs in the State of Texas. An orchestra program rich in tradition, the Highland Park Orchestras have received numerous honors and awards. These honors reflect the excellence of the program in which you are now involved. It is your responsibility to enhance that tradition and pass it on to future members.

PURPOSE

- To develop an understanding and appreciation for symphony and string orchestra repertoire.
- The development of the student's personal and musical growth through his/her contribution in all aspects of the orchestra organization.
- To assist students in growing into responsible and successful members of society, possessing the essential characteristics of integrity, dependability and loyalty.

IMPORTANT CONTACT INFORMATION

Matt Epperson	Director of Orchestras	EppersMa@hpsid.org (214) 780-4831
Genevra Williams	Highlander Strings Booster Club Co-President	genevra.williams@gmail.com
April Gonzalez	Highlander Strings Booster Club Co-President	aprilgonzalez@yahoo.com
Winnie Song	Highlander Strings Booster Treasurer	lele101002@icloud.com

ORCHESTRA MEMBERSHIP AND ORGANIZATION

Orchestra at Highland Park High School is both a class and an extracurricular activity. Membership in the Highland Park Orchestras is reserved to those who pass the entrance audition, maintain proper standards of conduct and fulfill their financial obligations. Grades are assigned for playing tests, concerts, written tests, playing and written quizzes, outside rehearsals and any classroom rehearsals and activities.

HIGHLAND PARK ORCHESTRAS PREREQUISITE

Teacher shall determine student placement into the different orchestras by audition.

REQUIRED MATERIALS FOR ORCHESTRA

- Instrument
- Black 1" binder with class music
- Pencil (at all times)
- Mute
- Rosin
- Soft cloth to wipe off instrument after each use
- Shoulder rest (violin/viola)
- Cello Strap or Rock Stop (cello/bass)

To begin the school year, each student will be given: a black binder. For in-school rented instruments, students will receive rosin, a soft cleaning cloth and a shoulder rest (for violins/violas) along with their instrument. Each student will be responsible for bringing all of the above supplies to class everyday.

KORG TUNERS

When using a school owned Korg tuner in class, please treat this piece of equipment with the same respect that you would treat your own instrument. In the event of damage or loss, the student is responsible for the replacement of that tuner at a cost of \$30.00. Microphone cord replacement cost is \$20.00.

PRIVATELY OWNED INSTRUMENTS

The quality of literature and the performance standards held by the Highland Park Orchestras program demands high quality instruments. Many students find it both musically and financially rewarding to own an investment-quality instrument. One distinct advantage of owning an instrument of this type is that in contrast to "starter" instruments which depreciate in value, quality string instruments actually accrue in value as they age. Instruments of this quality must be chosen carefully. Please ask Mr. Epperson and your private instructor to assist you in this decision.

GRADING SYSTEM

The grading system is broken down into two categories:

1. Performances, rehearsals and sectionals, playing tests and written work - 60%
2. Participation (materials), rehearsal etiquette, contributions and compliance - 40%

MUSICAL UNDERSTANDING AND GROWTH

- Mastery of musical skills will be assessed through work on your instrument: class rehearsals, playing tests, auditions and performances.
- Mastery of musical skill will be assessed through written work: tests, quizzes and homework.
- Listening and oral work in class.

EFFECTIVENESS AS AN ORCHESTRA MEMBER

- In this area, your contribution as a team member whether musical or non-musical will be evaluated.
- Learning to interact positively in a group setting.
- Having all materials needed and being ready to rehearse.
- Actively and positively participating in the rehearsal setting.
- **Demonstrate an understanding of an effective rehearsal environment by not distracting others from a positive rehearsal atmosphere.**

LATE WORK TURN-IN POLICY

- Students will lose 10 points per day that an assignment/test is late. **(does not apply to Senior Honors credit assignments)**
- Absences and special circumstances will be taken under consideration by the director on an individual basis. If the student is in class the day the assignment is made but absent the day it is due, the assignment is due the day the student returns to class. If the student is absent both the days the assignment was made and due, the student will have the number of days he/she was absent to get the assignment turned in to the teacher.
- Please refer to the Highland Park HS guidelines as stated in the Kilt.

ORCHESTRA REHEARSAL/CLASS PROCEDURE

Proper rehearsal procedure is the best way a musical group can improve and reach its potential. We will emulate the rehearsal practices of the professional symphony orchestra.

- Backpacks and books placed at the back or sides of the room, not in the rehearsal set up.
- Students in the room retrieve their instrument and class music when the tardy bell rings.
- A student will be considered tardy if he/she is not in the orchestra room when the bell rings.
- Tardy students will be handled according to rehearsal procedure and school policy.
- Students are expected to **finish** their preparations for class: rosin the bow, look at the board, prepare music and put a pencil on the stand in a quick and timely fashion.
- Nails must be trimmed to permit correct playing position.
- When playing, students shall sit with the posture that encourages greatest playing efficiency.

EXTRA REHEARSALS AND SECTIONALS

Extra rehearsals and sectionals may be necessary from time to time as performance pressures dictate. Every effort will be made to keep these to an absolute minimum. Rehearsals will be scheduled as conveniently as possible. Students are expected to attend such rehearsals or sectionals as his/her attendance will be graded. Please schedule tutorials and doctor visits around this time.

CLASS TIME CELL PHONE POLICY

- **Cell phones are to be secured in a backpack, purse or instrument case and out of sight for the entire class, rehearsal, or performance.**
- A cell phone on the music stand or chair is prohibited.
- A cell phone may be used only if the teacher grants permission and at the close of class when the student has been released by the teacher to pack up equipment.

ORCHESTRA AND PRACTICE ROOM ETIQUETTE

Students are expected to show respect for each other, all directors, private teachers, accompanists, and the facilities at all times in the orchestra room and all practice areas. The utmost care should be taken with instruments and with all room equipment. **Food and drinks are prohibited from the facilities with the exception of the director's approval.**

BEHAVIOR/DISCIPLINE REFERRALS

All behavior problems are handled on an individual basis. Misbehavior, disturbance, or disrespect in the classroom will not be tolerated. Students and parents should see the Code of Conduct for specific information on Discipline Referrals.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

All orchestra students must abide by the Highland Park High School attendance policy. Students who are members of the Highland Park Orchestras will be expected to participate in **all** activities of the organization; including rehearsals, sectionals, chamber music events, performances and trips.

Absences will be excused for the following cases:

- Death in the family
- Medical emergency or illness
- Religious holiday
- Private lessons during orchestra class
- Mr. Epperson must be notified by the parent

Absences will be unexcused for the following cases and similar situations:

- Family Trips
- College Visits
- Jobs/Tutoring
- Personal business or entertainment
- Doctor/Dentist appointments, etc.
- **Non** HPISD activities; i.e. athletics practice/game
- Not notifying Mr. Epperson of the absence (when it is not an emergency situation)

REQUESTS FOR AN EXCUSED ABSENCE

Requests for an excused absence from a performance or required event must be submitted by parent written request (email or written note) or by parent phone call at least **one week prior to the event**. In the case of illness or family emergency, an explanatory phone call, email, or written note from the parent as soon as possible is appreciated.

UNEXCUSED ABSENCES

- Unexcused absences will adversely affect the student's musical progress, the progress of the orchestra, and his/her orchestra grade.
- If attendance is a problem, it will jeopardize the student's membership in the group.
- Rules for absences apply to the entire rehearsal, before or after school.
- Being tardy to any rehearsal is the same as an unexcused absence for the portion missed of the rehearsal. Consequences will be determined by the length and reason for the tardiness.

****Mr. Epperson reserves the right to review any exceptions to the absence policy (either for or against) depending on individual circumstances.****

ELIGIBILITY

A student becomes ineligible (by State Law) to participate in orchestra competitions if his/her six weeks grade in any class is 69% or below. The penalty period, which begins one week after the grade is issued, lasts for three weeks. At the three weeks period progress report, an ineligible student can regain eligibility if all grades for all classes are 70% or above. **NO PASS – NO PLAY** can be stated positively: **ALL PASS – ALL PLAY**. Academic achievement must be of the highest priority to the members of the HPHS Highland Park Orchestras. A student with consistent problems with eligibility jeopardizes his/her opportunities for participation with the orchestra. A student in a higher orchestra could be moved down to a lower orchestra if consistent eligibility problems occur. **Example of co-curricular activities: Concerts. Examples of extracurricular activities: All Contests, All UIL Activities and the Spring Trip.**

PRIVATE LESSON PROGRAM

Private lessons are invaluable to the development of every music student's musical and technical growth. In-school private lessons can be scheduled during the student's orchestra class or lunch period. Mr. Epperson will help arrange lessons with highly qualified private teachers on each instrument. The cost for in-school lessons is \$25.00 for a half period lesson or \$50 for a full period lesson once a week. Checks are made payable to the individual private teacher. Private instruction on a musical instrument is considered enrichment to the musical growth of your student, not a remedial instruction. I **STRONGLY RECOMMEND** private lessons, either in school or out of school, for all students.

FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS

Applicable fees and costs are required of every student in the Highland Park Orchestras Program. In the event of financial hardship, special payment plans may be discussed with Mr. Epperson and/or the Booster Club.

OPERATIONS FEE

A mandatory fee of \$250 is required and will be charged to each orchestra student annually. The purpose of this fee is to cover the overall operations costs of the orchestra program including but not limited to: recording engineers, UIL and solo/ensemble fees, All-Region fees, sectional coaches, binders, pencils, rosin, classroom/office supplies, music, arrangements, community posters, printed concert programs, orchestra banquet dinner/decorations/awards, Group Dynamix and other fees associated with spirit driven social and team building activities.

SCHOOL INSTRUMENT USAGE AND FEE REQUIREMENTS

In the event a student wishes to borrow (depending on availability) an instrument for school use or home use, the student and parent(s) are responsible for the following criteria and fees.

INSTRUMENT HOME USE

- Annual payment of \$150.00 for rental instrument and bow (payable to **Highlander Strings Booster Club**).
- Instrument repairs necessitated by careless or reckless handling of the instrument.
- Supplying rosin, replacement strings, shoulder rest, bow hair, and other incidentals necessary to good instrument upkeep and student performance.
- At the end of the school year, returning the instrument in good working order or with noted maintenance needs approved by the HPHS Orchestra Director.
- Responsible for the replacement cost of the instrument and/or bow if lost, badly damaged, broken, or stolen.

SCHOOL USE

- Annual payment of \$100.00 for rental instrument and bow (payable to **Highlander Strings Booster Club**).
- Instrument repairs necessitated by careless or reckless handling of the instrument.
- At the end of the school year, returning the instrument in good working order or with noted maintenance needs approved by the HPHS Orchestra Director.
- Responsible for fees relating to the damage of the instrument.

UNIFORMS

A student's grade will be docked on a performance if the student is wearing an incomplete uniform or not adhering to the standards of the following uniform requirements.

BOYS

- Tuxedo jacket and pants (rented from HPISD)
- Black bow tie and black cummerbund (rented from HPISD)
- White pleated wing-tip tuxedo shirt (provided by student)
- Black dress shoes
- Long black dress socks (**socks must cover the lower ankle and leg**)
- **Tuxedos may be rented from HPISD for \$55 a year or purchased on your own.**

GIRLS

- School ordered long black dress, hemmed to 1” off the floor with appropriate shoes
- Closed-toed black dress shoes
- Black pantyhose or stockings
- **The dress is a one-time cost of \$80. Details will be sent out regarding the ordering of dresses, the transaction will be between you and Southeastern Apparel.**
- **Bare legs and flip flops are unacceptable.**

ORCHESTRA POLO AND HOODIES

- For the 2022-2023 school year, all students will receive an orchestra t-shirt and a polo shirt included with their mandatory fees. This was done in an effort to get all the shirts with the same “new” logos rolled out to the students.
- Orchestra students may purchase an optional orchestra hoodie if they would like for \$55.

SPRING TRIP: PERFORMANCE AND TRAVEL

The Highland Park Orchestras take one Spring Trip most years and participation is highly encouraged. Students will be advised of the cost required to attend the Spring Trip as soon as arrangements are solidified. Obligations may be met through direct payment, donations or through fundraising activities. Requirements for all travel performances are:

- **Students must meet all local and State eligibility requirements to participate in travel or competitions.**
- Students must be able to satisfactorily perform the materials assigned for performance.
- Students must have attended scheduled rehearsals necessary for the preparation for the performance.
- Students must fulfill their financial obligations to the organization and attend the mandatory trip meeting with a legal parent/guardian.

STUDENT LEADERS

The Highland Park Orchestras offer numerous opportunities for students to hold leadership positions. These offices enable the students to develop leadership skills as they make a strong contribution to the quality of the orchestra program. Student leadership positions are elected by the students and may also be appointed by the director.

HONORS CREDIT

Students are eligible for honors credit during their Senior year by participating in the Highland Park Orchestra program for 8 consecutive semesters of high school. Requirements: 100% attendance for all concerts and performances and be eligible for all UIL events. In addition, there will be one additional assignment due each nine weeks. **Work must be turned in by Friday of the eighth week in order to receive Honors Credit, otherwise your grade for this category will be a zero.** Mr. Epperson reserves the right to review individual exceptions.

SENIOR PINK HONOR GRADUATION CORDS

A senior orchestra student is eligible for a Pink Honors Graduation Cord if he/she has fulfilled all of the obligations of receiving Honors Credit **every *nine weeks*** of his/her senior year. Most importantly, this includes completing all of the Honors assignments and turning them in on-time for every six-week grading period and being eligible for all UIL activities and performances.

HIGHLANDER STRINGS BOOSTER CLUB

The Highlander Strings Booster Club is a support group for our orchestra program. The only requirement for membership is to have a child in the orchestra. Not only do the Boosters cheer us on at all of our performances, but they volunteer to chaperone trips and help to organize and work at the orchestra's fundraisers and functions. There are numerous Booster Club positions to be held by parents and ways to get involved. Parents, please attend the Orchestra Booster club meetings held on the second Monday of each month. Parent involvement in the Booster club and all of its activities is vital to the success of the Highland Park Orchestra program, which directly affects your child.

CHARMS, GOOGLE CLASSROOM, AND REMIND COMMUNICATION

This organization will utilize the musical database and communication entity called *Charms*. Each family will have its own unique login to access the database. Through Charms, you can access the orchestra calendar of events, financial information, and numerous documents pertaining to private lessons, honors credit, the Booster Club, and All-Region Music. Mr. Epperson will send mass communications out via Charms, so it is imperative that each student and at least one parent/guardian has the **CORRECT** email address listed in the

student's profile. Each login is only able to have **ONE** password, therefore families need to share this password and keep it easily accessible.

Charms Website: www.charmsoffice.com

Charms School Code: HPHSOorch (not case sensitive)

Charms Password: upon the first login, the password will be your child's student ID number. You will then be immediately prompted to change the password to something more personal. It is advised to choose something the whole family can remember, such as a pet's name. If you forget your password, follow these instructions [here](#). If you do not remember the email or cell phone number you used, email Mr. Epperson that information and he can modify your profile accordingly and then you will be able to reset it yourself using the same method.

We will also use *Google Classroom* for assignments and the *Remind* app for trips, socials, and other events that require live communication. Students will be required to enroll and update their information in all three services.

This handbook is a guide to make your experience in orchestra as productive and enjoyable as possible. The rules it contains have been developed over many years of experience and refinement and are meant to serve one purpose: to promote the musical and personal development of our orchestra members. Like any good set of guidelines, it is constantly being improved upon as conditions change. If you have any questions about the policies in this book, please do not hesitate to discuss them with Mr. Epperson.

HIGHLAND PARK HIGH SCHOOL ORCHESTRAS
2023-2024
STUDENT HANDBOOK AGREEMENT

DATE _____

STUDENT:

I have read the entire handbook and calendar and understand how it applies to me as a member of the Highland Park Orchestras Program.

PRINTED _____

SIGNED _____

Highland Park Orchestras Member

PARENT/LEGAL GUARDIAN:

I have read the entire handbook and calendar and understand how it applies to my student as a member of the Highland Park Orchestras Program.

PRINTED _____

SIGNED _____

Parent/Legal Guardian