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Dear Orchestra Parents and Students,

Welcome! We are very excited to continue on the Woodcreek Middle School team as the Orchestra Directors. Our focus this year will be to grow as musicians and to continue the excellence of the Woodcreek Orchestras.

We love what we do, and we will offer a positive approach to the learning of instrumental music. Through this instruction, opportunities exist to promote self-esteem, teamwork, individual and group accomplishments, and great musical experiences. We hope that your child will take advantage of the many offerings and be an involved member of our organization.

Parental support and involvement is a key asset to our program. Please encourage your child to PRACTICE at home, organize their orchestra binders, and to participate in the extra activities available. Our concerts throughout the year are the best way for parents and family members to see their young musician at work. Make plans to attend every concert.

A calendar of events can be found on our website and in the student’s binder. Please mark the orchestra events on your calendar and notify us as soon as possible if you have any major conflicts. **Charms is where you can find all dates, forms, and volunteer opportunities. Make sure to download Charms Blue on your smartphone!** Just like any team, each member of the orchestra is important and necessary to our success. Still, we realize that students are involved in many different activities besides orchestra. We will do my best to work with you and your family’s schedule. Early communication is the key.

Additionally, if there is a time when materials or finances are an issue, please let us know. We would like to work with you to make participation in the Woodcreek Orchestra the best possible experience for your child, and finances should never stand in the way.

We are looking forward to a wonderful year. Please contact us throughout the year if you have any questions or concerns.

Thank you for this opportunity to work with your child!

*Heather Davis, Pedro Funes, and Justin Fulfer*
COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

First Year Orchestra
This orchestra is for beginning 6th-8th graders. The emphasis of this class will be on developing fundamental techniques such as: posture, position, tone production, rhythm, note reading, ear training, and musicianship.

Participation Requirements:
1. Concerts
2. After School Rehearsals
3. Solo and Ensemble Contest
4. Splashtown Competition

Philharmonic and Symphony Orchestras
This orchestra consists of 7th and 8th graders with at least one year of prior playing experience who have auditioned and been selected for this ensemble. The emphasis of this class will be on strengthening fundamental techniques such as: posture, position, tone production, rhythm, note reading, ear training, and musicianship. Students will also continue to learn more advanced techniques such as vibrato, shifting, extensions, and two-octave scales.

Participation Requirements:
1. Concerts
2. After School Rehearsals
3. Solo and Ensemble Contest
4. Pre-UIL Concert
5. UIL Concert & Sightreading Contest

Chamber Orchestra
Symphony and Chamber consist of 7th and 8th graders with at least one year of prior playing experience who have auditioned and been selected for this ensemble. Students will continue to learn more advanced techniques such as vibrato, shifting, extensions, and multi-octave scales.

Participation Requirements:
1. Concerts
2. After-School Rehearsals and Sectionals
3. All-Region Orchestra Auditions
4. Solo and Ensemble Contest
5. Pre-UIL Concert
6. UIL Concert & Sightreading Contest
REQUIRED SUPPLIES

1. Essential Elements 2000, Book 1 and 2 (FYO only)
2. Shoulder Rest (violins and violas)
3. Xeros Rock Stop (cellos and basses)
4. Wire Music Stand (for use at home)
5. Cleaning Cloth (a washcloth also works)
6. 3’ Stool (for bass players to use at home)
7. Rosin
8. Tuner (D’Addario clip on)

*These supplies can be purchased through your child’s instrument rental company. Just call them and tell them what you need, and they will have it sent to the school.*

CLASS MATERIALS

A black binder and set of dividers will be issued to every student as part of your supplies fee. This, plus the following items, must be in class EVERY day and it is part of your grade. **Students who are missing the following supplies will receive 10 points off of their Materials grade for the week. (takes effect starting 11/5/2018)**

The Orchestra daily supplies will consist of the following items:

1. Black Orchestra Binder and dividers
2. Instrument & Bow
3. Shoulder Rest
4. Rosin
5. Music

The Orchestra Binder will consist of the following items:

1. Pencil
2. Warm-up Packet
3. 5-tab Dividers
4. Essential Elements Book
5. Theory book/theory papers
6. One photocopy of each piece currently being played. If the sheet music is lost, additional copies will be made by the student by borrowing a classmate’s music.
7. Practice Chart If the Practice chart is lost, students can find an extra in our red box.

**SUPPLY CHECKS** will be unannounced. You will receive 100 points if you have everything at your seat once class begins. You will lose 10 points off your grade for each item missing, or for each day supplies are late.

**PRACTICE**

All students are required to turn in a weekly practice record to instill good musical habits. This will be turned in EVERY MONDAY and signed by a parent or guardian. This is part of the grade for all orchestra students and should be considered homework. This is not an assignment that you can make up – either you practice or you don’t.

**REPAIRS**

If you are RENTING an instrument, repairs are simple to take care of. When something needs to be repaired, we will give your child a note that outlines what repairs need to be done. It is then your responsibility to call the rental company and let them know they need to come pick up the instrument from the school.

If you OWN the instrument, then it is up to you to find a local company that will take care of the repair, at YOUR cost.

**SCHOOL INSTRUMENT & EQUIPMENT POLICY**

Cello and Bass players You will be provided with a school instrument to use during class. However, cello students are required to rent an instrument for home practice. Bass students will be loaned an instrument from the school to take home. Students are expected to bring their home instruments for events such as concerts.

Bass players At the beginning of the year, each student will fill out an Orchestra Instrument Contract and list any visible damage to the instrument & bow (such as nicks and scratches, etc.) At the end of the year, student, parent and teacher will inspect the instrument and again list any visible damage. Students will be responsible for paying to repair any damage beyond normal wear and tear due to carelessness or defacement.

ALL STUDENTS participating in orchestra will be required to sign a contract regarding use of District school instruments and equipment. The school instruments and equipment are extremely delicate and must be treated with the utmost care and respect. Because of this, each student will fill out an District Equipment Contract and will be held responsible for the care of his/her instrument and bow, including packing it up safely, handling it carefully, and cleaning off rosin. Any damage to school instruments or equipment by your child will result in YOU being billed for the cost of repairs.
GRADING

Concerts will count twice in the grade book. All other grades including chair tests, supply checks, counting tests, note reading exams, etc. will count one time.

Eligibility: Students who participate in orchestra will be expected to maintain passing grades in all subjects. This is extremely important to our ensemble. Activities such as UIL contest and competitions at amusement parks are considered extra-curricular. A student cannot participate unless he or she has passed all classes.

CONCERT POLICY

The success of our orchestra depends on ALL students attending each and every performance. By enrolling in orchestra, students and their parents are committing to attending all orchestra concerts during the year. Each concert performance is worth 200 points.

Emergency Absences

However, we do understand that things happen that make it impossible for a student to attend a concert. These types of absences can be made up. Students may make up a missed concert if these criteria are met: The absence is due to the student’s own illness, a death in the family, or a religious holiday. Due to the infrequency of our concerts, sporting events outside of school athletics are NEVER considered excused conflicts.
**PERFORMANCE DRESS**

Our appearance reflects the pride we have in our performance. Students will be expected to follow Concert Dress guidelines strictly. REMEMBER: Appropriate concert dress is part of your child’s grade! If they do not follow uniform requirements for concerts, they will NOT be allowed to perform at these events, and it will severely affect their grade. For all onstage formal concert performances, please dress as follows:

**Formal:**
- Black Dress Shirt included in Orchestra Fee (tucked in)
- Black Dress Pants (no jeans)
- Black Dress Shoes (closed toe black flats for girls)
- Black Socks or Stockings

**Informal Uniform**
- Current Year’s Orchestra T-Shirt
- Blue Jeans (no holes or designs)
- Shoes

**FINGERNAIL POLICY**

All students are required to have fingernails that allow them to perform with proper playing position. The nail should not extend out further than the finger. Each individual needs are different, so if you have any questions, please ask the directors. Artificial nails are not permitted. We understand that a special event may require artificial nails, but the nails should be removed right after the event. Thank you for your understanding in this matter.

**TRIP ATTENDANCE POLICY**

The student has to have a passing grade in ALL subject areas in order to be eligible to participate in any orchestra trip.

**MONEY COLLECTING POLICY**

The payment for orchestra fees, trips and other events is to be done completely online through charmsoffice.com. We will not accept check or cash. If for a dire reason a payment through check or cash is necessary, it must be directly arranged with one of the Orchestra Booster Club officers.

**TRIP REFUND POLICY**

We are unable to process refunds for trips. If a student is unable to attend a trip we might be able to provide the ticket to the amusement park the trip was destined to.