



**Williams  
Orchestra**

**HANDBOOK**

**2025-2026**

**Amber Kober- Orchestra Director**

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August 13, 2025

Dear Orchestra Students and Parents,  
Welcome to the Williams Orchestra Program!

I would like to thank you for the privilege of working with your young musician. I am looking forward to a productive and enjoyable school year. I want your child to develop a lifetime hobby, one that may even earn a scholarship for college! This handbook outlines the Orchestra Program and provides information on policies and dates for events this school year. I will do my absolute best to provide your child with quality instruction and a positive learning experience.

Below are the objectives of the Williams Orchestra:

- develop a foundation for the understanding of the elements of music.
- build a sense of teamwork and community among orchestra members.
- model and cultivate a work ethic and schedule management that will aid the student throughout life.
- instill an awareness of music's importance as well as an appreciation for the arts.
- encourage and promote high expectations for student success in all subjects.

Please **read and fill out the QR code at the end** with your student. I look forward to working with you and your child this year. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call or email.

Together, with your support and encouragement from home, our orchestra will become one of the best in Plano ISD!

Musically yours,

Amber Kober  
Orchestra Director  
Williams High School  
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amber.kober@pisd.edu

# Williams Orchestra Equipment List

## ALL STUDENTS ARE TO HAVE THE FOLLOWING EQUIPMENT IN CLASS EVERYDAY:

Instrument/Bow with all accessories: shoulder rest, rosin, cloth

Tuner / Metronome

Pencils, 2

Black 3-ring binder with overlay, Name on front cover

All music currently being rehearsed

Fingernails kept short for proper technique

## ADDITIONAL EQUIPMENT FOR HOME:

Music Stand

Tuner / Metronome

Recording Device (phone, computer, tablet, etc.)

Proper maintenance of your instrument is **REQUIRED**. If strings have not been replaced within two years, they will need to be replaced by the end of *September*. Strings should be replaced **annually**. Violin and viola players should use Dominant strings or a higher quality on their instruments. A set of extra Strings are always good to have on hand. All bows need to be rehaired at least once per year.

**Equipment and Nail checks may occur at random moments throughout the school year.**

Recommended Vendors listed below if you need supplies or repairs.

- Dallas Strings  
20 E McDermott Dr Allen, TX 75002  
(469) 675-0085
- Williamson Music Co.  
701 E Plano Pkwy #100 Plano, TX 75074  
(972) 633-8203
- Music and Arts  
701 N Central Expressway Suite 200, Plano, Tx75075  
(972)424-1317
- Southwest Strings: [www.swstrings.com](http://www.swstrings.com) OR Shar Music Company: [www.sharmusic.com](http://www.sharmusic.com)

If your student is on a full size instrument and committed to continuing, you may buy an instrument from a reputable instrument shop in the area. Be mindful, it will be quite the investment (\$2,000+) if it is a quality instrument even more if your student plays cello or bass. Please ensure your student tries the instrument with various bows and is in love with the quality of sound and action before purchasing.

## Rent from Williams MS

Renting an instrument from Plano ISD is a yearly Instrument fee of \$85. Families must submit an Instrument Usage Agreement form before receiving the instrument. I highly recommend cello and bass players to have an instrument at school and at home for practice. Families with financial strain, please email Mrs. Kober for assistance.

# **Williams Orchestra Syllabus**

The Plano ISD Secondary Music Program offers a comprehensive music education through the study of music theory, history, form, analysis, and performance of music literature from all style periods and varied cultures.

Students will:

- Display sound fundamental concepts of tone, rhythm, sight-reading, performance technique, and musical expression.
- Develop music notation skills and be able to create music via written composition and improvisational techniques.
- Acquire listening skills in order to critically evaluate musical performances of individuals and groups.
- Understand the relationships between music and other arts and disciplines, and appreciate the historical and cultural significance of music in our society.
- Appreciate music as an avocation and/or vocation.
- Exhibit informed concert etiquette during live performances in a variety of settings.

All students will be provided with a copy of the Orchestra Syllabus/Calendar of Events during the first week of school. The Syllabus will also be posted on Google Classroom for reference at home.

## **REHEARSAL & PERFORMANCE ETIQUETTE**

By the time a student reaches high school, he/she should understand appropriate rehearsal skills and behavior. The efficiency of successful music programs demonstrates appropriate behavior and the utmost respect for the organization. High behavior standards are expected of everyone in our program. Rehearsals are to be quiet and orderly. Students should conduct themselves with dignity and class at all times, whether in rehearsals, performances, outside of the orchestra room, and on the bus. Remember, you are representing the Williams Orchestra and Plano ISD at all times.

Inappropriate behavior will be dealt with by one or more of the following:

- Private conference with student
- Loss of privileges
- Parental notification
- Office referral
- Moving student to a lower orchestra
- Removal from orchestra

Members who continue to display inappropriate behavior or who violate the policies of the school could be permanently removed from orchestra.

## **REHEARSAL EXPECTATIONS**

In orchestra rehearsals we not only deal with a creative process, but also with a great deal more students at one time than do other classroom teachers. Because of this, it is imperative that orchestra students be organized and prepared for every rehearsal. When an individual is not able to play his or her instrument during a rehearsal, it hurts the GROUP, as well as the individual. It is important that students' instruments are in good working condition; that they have a pencil on their stand to mark their music; and that they have important accessories such as rosin and tuners for every rehearsal. It is also obvious that the creative process that we are involved in cannot take place unless there is a quiet, attentive atmosphere in the classroom. Students who do

not live up to the high rehearsal expectations of the WHS Orchestra will be counseled, and, if necessary, moved to a lower orchestra or removed from the orchestra program.

## **PRACTICE & PRIVATE LESSONS**

Everyone is expected to take his or her instrument home every night and practice. You cannot hope to improve on your instrument if you don't practice, so please practice! There will not be practice cards, but there will be weekly testing. Be mature and practice on your own. We expect a commitment of approximately 30 minutes per day.

Private lessons are expected for Chamber Orchestra members and highly recommended for all orchestra students. Lessons are available for every instrument and are strongly encouraged. The school district chooses teachers for every instrument who are highly qualified to teach you. Lessons cost \$25 for 25-30 minutes and can be taken during orchestra class or after school, depending on scheduling. You can sign up for lessons at the beginning of the school year. This is one of the secrets to our orchestra's success. Please participate if at all possible.

## **Grading Policy**

Performance recordings or in-class performance tests will be assigned weekly throughout the semester to determine grades. Seating arrangements will be determined by the director prior to each concert. Points will be deducted from assignments that are turned in after the given deadline. Assignments that are more than one week late will not be accepted and will result in a 25 in the gradebook. Any changes to the syllabus or additional rehearsals/performances will be announced well in advance. Proper concert attire is required for each performance. Proper nail length is required for all performances, rehearsals and sectionals. Any and all sectionals, evening rehearsals or performances are CO-CURRICULAR, and are an important percentage of the nine weeks grade. **WORK CONFLICTS WILL NOT BE EXCUSED; PLEASE MARK YOUR CALENDARS.** If students miss a required performance for any reason, they will be given an alternate assignment for a maximum grade of 90%.

Grading structure for each grading period will be:

50%: Tests/Concerts/Before or after school rehearsals and sectionals

50%: Rehearsal Etiquette/Quizzes/Equipment Checks/Nail Checks

## **Concert Logistics**

Orchestra Concerts at Williams will begin at 6:30 in the Auditorium. We have multiple concerts off campus this year. Details will be provided via email leading up to the event.

For concerts at Williams, students will stay after school on concert days. I will provide food for them, they will change and we will rehearse before parents arrive. Students will be graded on appropriate concert etiquette, appropriate dress, and their performance.

Concerts will last approximately 1 hour possibly longer for combined school concerts. Students are expected to stay for the entirety of the concert.

## **Eligibility and Behavior**

It is important to know that **eligibility does not affect concert activities**. A concert is considered co-curricular, which means that it is mandatory. However, extra-curricular activities such as off campus field trips, contests, and evening activities other than concerts or rehearsals require that a student be passing all classes either on their last report card or their last mid-3 weeks progress report to participate.

Due to new 2025-2026 state mandated policies, students who are sent to ISS or OSS will also face a potential probationary period or dismissal from the program. Probationary periods will include suspension from performance(s), and severe cases will result in removal from the band program. All infractions will be handled on a case-by-case basis. Please be on your best behavior so this does not become an issue.

## **Uniforms**

In order for us to perform well, it is important that we look professional. We have three uniforms:

### **INFORMAL:**

Orchestra t-shirt with jeans

### **COLLARED:**

Orchestra Polo, black slacks, black socks, and black dress shoes (no tennis shoes)

### **FORMAL:**

**Girls:** Concert dresses (provided by Williams HS). Please wear black dress shoes, flats, or heels.

**Boys:** Black Jacket, black pants, cummerbunds, and bow ties. (provided by Williams HS.) Please acquire a white tuxedo shirt, black socks, and black dress shoes to accompany the uniform.

Your child is responsible for keeping the uniform in excellent condition during the school year and returning the uniform in excellent condition at the end of the school year. **DO NOT CUT ANY MATERIAL**. If the uniform is lost or damaged, you will be charged the replacement fee of the item.

## **Opportunities**

Orchestra Officer - In the fall, students can apply to be a student officer. This will be a handful of students that have designated leadership tasks throughout the year.

Region Orchestra – In the fall, students have the opportunity to audition and if accepted, perform with the top student musicians around the region. If interested, preparation starts at the beginning of the school year.

UIL Contest – In March, Orchestras will perform for 6 judges in concert and sightreading. (Participation is Audition based)

Solo and Ensemble Competition – In May, students will have the opportunity to perform solos or in small ensembles for a judge and receive a rating, feedback, and possible award.

Section Leaders – Each instrument in each orchestra will have a section leader. The section leader is selected by our chair tests and leadership skills. The section leader is not a permanent position and is open for changes.

## **Private Lessons:**

Private lessons are the best way for your student to improve beyond putting in the time to practice. I encourage every student to take private lessons to progress in their musical studies. I will be inviting teachers to teach private lessons during the school day. If they are not yet doing so, please encourage your child to take private lessons once a week. Rates for Private lessons at the school are \$25 for half a class period.

## **Orchestra Fee:**

The orchestra fee is **\$50 per student. This fee covers the cost of your student being in the program.** The \$50 payment can be cash in an envelope (with name, amount, reason) or check to Williams High School Orchestra Booster Club, online payment option is being finalized.

## **Williams Orchestra Booster Club:**

As parents of an orchestra student you are already a member. We would love for you to get involved and be an active member! Having a group of parents who actively support the program makes it possible to further enrich the experience your child has in orchestra. The booster club helps raise funds for trips and parties, helps distribute and size uniforms, funds instruction resources, chaperones trips, organizes socials, etc. Parents are encouraged to become involved! We need all parents to do a little so a handful of parents are not doing too much!

## **Parent Volunteer**

If you are able, please volunteer your time to the Williams Orchestra. Any help would be greatly appreciated. Thank you in advance for your time.

\*In order to volunteer and work with the kids, you must first complete a Criminal History Background Check with Plano ISD. Go to: [plano.voly.org](http://plano.voly.org)

## **Williams Orchestra Department Contract**

I have read the Williams Orchestra Handbook and agree to abide by all of the policies stated. I realize that it takes 100% from all students to make our Orchestra a success, and I agree to do my best to help achieve that goal.

I have read and discussed the Williams Orchestra Handbook with my child. I understand all the policies of the program and understand that my child needs to be in attendance at all required performances and rehearsals. I also understand all financial obligations.

Thank you for your thorough reading of the policies in this handbook. Please scan the QR code and fill out this google form no later than **Friday, August 15th.**

