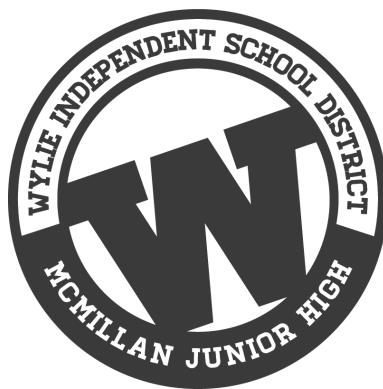


WYLIE ISD ORCHESTRA



STUDENT HANDBOOK

2026 – 2027

INTRODUCTION

As a member of the *Wylie ISD Orchestra Program*, you are part of one of the most outstanding music programs in America. While we are still in our developmental stage, the orchestra program in Wylie ISD has received consistent recognition as being among the best. We are excited that you are joining the excellence of the program and contributing to a rich tradition of musical and personal integrity. It is your responsibility to continue enhancing traditions and pass them on to future members.

The rules and procedures outlined in this handbook have been developed to accomplish these goals in the most efficient and productive manner, and to provide an accurate method of assessing each student's progress. The ultimate goal of the organization is the personal and musical progress of each student. The success of the *Wylie ISD Orchestra Program* is based on the concept of each student performing their assigned tasks to the best of their ability. Each student is capable of making a contribution to the group and growing in knowledge and appreciation.

Purpose

The purposes of the *Wylie ISD Orchestra Program* are:

- **to develop an understanding and appreciation for symphonic and string orchestra repertoire**
- **to train students in music to a point where they may participate in the performance of these great works and enable them to continue making music, whether as an avocation or a profession, after graduation from high school**
- **to assist students in growing into responsible and successful members of society and possessing the essential characteristics of integrity, dependability, and loyalty**

WYLIE ISD ORCHESTRA DIRECTORS

**Wylie High School
McMillan Junior High School
Davis Intermediate School**

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ORCHESTRA MEMBERSHIP AND ORGANIZATION

Orchestra in Wylie ISD is both a class and an activity. Instruction on a stringed instrument is available to anyone who wishes to enroll. Membership in the *McMillan Junior High School and Wylie High School Orchestra* is reserved to those who pass the entrance audition, maintain proper standards of conduct, and fulfill their financial obligations. Wind and percussion players will be selected by audition from members of the McMillan Junior High School and Wylie High School Band programs to form full symphony orchestras.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

All Orchestra students must abide by the Wylie Orchestra attendance policy. Attendance is required at all rehearsals, sectionals, chamber music rehearsals and performances.

Absences will be excused in the following cases:

Death in the family

Medical emergency or illness

Religious holiday

Private music lessons ONLY during orchestra class.

Absences will be **UNEXCUSED** in the following and/or similar cases:

Family trips

Jobs

Personal business or entertainment

Drivers Ed

Private music lessons before or after school

All requests for excused absence from before or after school rehearsals are to be **REPORTED IN WRITING AND HANDED DIRECTLY TO A DIRECTOR**. If an absence is anticipated, a written request for an excused absence should be submitted at least **two days** in advance. Circumstances may justify an excused absence for reasons other than those listed above. In the case of illness or family emergency, an explanatory telephone call prior to the rehearsal or performance is appropriate. A written notice signed by a legal guardian is expected the following day.

A typical nine-week period will have one to nine rehearsals/performances outside the regular school day. Our ability to make the best use of this time will be a very important factor in our success as an ensemble. To do that, we must have everyone present. Unexcused absences will adversely affect your musical progress, the progress of the orchestra, and your orchestra grade. You **WILL** jeopardize your membership in the group if attendance becomes a persistent problem. Unlike athletic events, there are no “benchwarmers” in the orchestra. Every member is expected to rehearse, practice, and perform.

Rules for absences apply to the entire rehearsal. Being tardy to a rehearsal is the same as being absent (unexcused) for part of that rehearsal. Consequences will be determined by the length and reason for the tardy.

ORCHESTRA GRADES

As a member of the *Wylie Orchestra*, you will be evaluated in two major areas:

- **Musical understanding and growth.**
- **Effectiveness as an orchestra member.**

MUSICAL UNDERSTANDING AND GROWTH

This area is a gauge of your mastery of the musical skills that are taught in the class. These skills will be assessed through written work (tests, quizzes, and homework), work on your instrument (playing tests, auditions, and performances), and ear training done in class. The balance of these areas will be somewhat different each grading period. Musical improvement through individual study and practice will always be rewarded regardless of your level of experience at the beginning of the year.

EFFECTIVENESS AS AN ORCHESTRA MEMBER

This area evaluates your contribution as a team member in musical and non-musical areas. Regardless of how well you understand the material presented in class or how well you play your instrument, your effectiveness to the ensemble suffers if you are not present, do not have the materials you need, or choose not to actively participate. Orchestra class differs from many other classes in this area. Learning to operate positively in a group setting is an important component of orchestra class.

Grading System

A minimum grade of 70% is required to participate in all extra-curricular activities. If you are not eligible; you **do not perform!** An incomplete in a course is also deemed ineligible. This breakdown is a reference-guide to help you better understand how we make a subjective task as objective and concrete as possible.

Our system is broken down into two categories:

1. Performances and playing tests = 60%
2. Daily participation grade and rehearsals = 40%

Performances and Tests - 100 points possible

More than 10 minutes late = 10 point deduction

Missing materials = 10 point deduction

Rehearsals/sectionals - 100 points possible

More than 10 minutes late = 10 point deduction

Missing materials = 10 point deduction

Daily participation grade - 100 points possible per week

20 points per day, one weekly grade in grade book

No pencil = 0 points for the day

No music = 0 points for the day

No instrument = 0 points for the day

If you are absent or no school, you still get 20 pts

Late work will be accepted until three days after the assignment is posted in the gradebook. Absences and special circumstances will be taken under consideration by the director on an individual basis. If you are in class the day the assignment is made but absent the day it is due, the assignment is due the day you arrive back in class. If you are absent both the days the assignment is made and due, you have the number of days you were absent to get the assignment turned in.

ORCHESTRA REHEARSALS/CLASS

Procedure

- Proper rehearsal procedure is the only way any musical group can improve and reach its potential. We attempt to emulate the same procedure as a professional symphony orchestra. At the beginning of each rehearsal, students should be seated in their proper chairs with their instruments, all required music, working pencils, calendars for any possible date changes, and any other equipment required. Instrument cases should be closed and placed beside your seat. Backpacks and purses should be placed in the designated area. Tardiness will be handled according to school policy. **GO TO THE BATHROOM ON YOUR OWN TIME, NOT CLASS TIME!** Failure to meet these criteria will result in the student being counted tardy.

We will attempt to maintain an atmosphere of relaxed concentration. Attention should remain focused on the music and the director at all times. Talking, except for relevant questions, or distracting behavior should be eliminated. **Eating, drinking or chewing gum is not permitted.** Students should remain in their seats unless asked or given permission to move.

Posture should always be that which encourages greatest playing efficiency. Remember, we are playing high level music which demands your best efforts. You should be sitting on the front of the chair with both feet flat on the floor to establish proper body balance. The back should be straight to permit free use of the arms and proper breathing. The instrument should be held properly to allow the easiest playing technique with the least fatigue. Fingernails must be trimmed to permit correct playing position. Proper posture and instrument position have been developed through centuries of experimentation to produce the best results with the fewest problems. It is essential that we use this knowledge to enhance our performance.

Music

Every person is expected to bring his or her binder and music to EVERY rehearsal. This will be checked periodically. All bowings, fingerings, changes in the music, and major rehearsal suggestions should be marked in these parts. Please handle music carefully and responsibly.

Chair Tests/Seating

Our goal when assigning seats is to create the best possible sound for each section while giving our members the best possible experience. The results of the seating audition should not be interpreted as a ranking of our players from strongest to least experienced; rather the more experienced players are spread throughout the section and may be paired with players who are less experienced. This encourages a depth of richness to the orchestral sound and creates an even and strong string section from back to front. This model is based upon a professional orchestra in which *every* musician is an important, vital, and valued part of our orchestra whether in the front, middle, or back. All work together to create the mature sound that is the legacy of the Wylie Orchestra. The strength of any orchestra is determined by *back row leadership* more than any other single factor.

Full Orchestra Rehearsals

We will have full orchestra rehearsals throughout the year. This schedule will have to be adjusted to accommodate holidays and other school activities. Be aware of what the schedule is at all times. We take great pride in the fact that we are able to have a full symphony orchestra. These rehearsals represent the only time during the week that we may rehearse as such. Full attendance at these rehearsals is critical. Only the most pressing problems will be granted excused absences. Please think ahead about your schedule so that you can avoid putting yourself in an unpleasant situation.

STUDENT FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS

Student members of the *Wylie Orchestra* are expected to contribute annually the amount of money which will be spent on them. This obligation may be divided into two general categories: local support (social activities, clinicians, scholarships, etc.) and travel. Students will be advised of the amount required in each of these categories as soon as the budget is set each fall. Obligations may be met through direct donations or through fundraising activities. All fundraising projects are for the convenience of the student.

FEES

A **\$150 (Wylie High)/ \$35 (McMillan JH)** fee will be charged to each student yearly to pay for uniform cleaning, orchestra shirts, and local festival fees. This fee will also help to cover the cost of concerts, clinicians, and supplies needed throughout the year.

PERFORMANCE AND TRAVEL

In addition to local performances, Wylie Orchestras will perform concerts at local and out of town Festivals. Wylie High School is allowed one overnight trip every year. All members of the orchestra are expected to travel with the group. We must have everyone participate to be our best. Requirements for these 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**

PRIVATE STUDY

Wylie ISD has a strong private study program and comes highly recommended. The teachers who participate in the private study program are highly qualified professionals who are approved by our staff members. While private study participation is not a requirement, it should be noted that most students take advantage of this excellent opportunity. The advantages of one-on-one experiences are overwhelming. Additionally, our staff members work very closely with the private teachers in evaluating and monitoring each student's progress. Productive participation in this program by as many students as possible is strongly encouraged. Contact your director at any point in the year if you are interested in participating in this program.

EQUIPMENT AND UNIFORMS

Our equipment and uniforms represent a large investment on the part of the Wylie Independent School District. It is everyone's responsibility to see that they receive proper care. Instruments, equipment and uniforms will be issued to individual students who are expected to care for them as if they were their own. All cello and bass players will be assigned an instrument to use at school. A limited number of violins and violas is available for students who are not able to rent. All normal upkeep and maintenance is the responsibility of the student. Students will be responsible for any deductible fees on insurance claims. Instruments will be issued and returned in good playing condition. No one may play on another person's instrument without permission. Instruments are to be properly cased and stored when not in use. Anyone who damages equipment through carelessness or neglect will be required to pay for its repair. Each student will be required to return uniforms in the condition in which it was issued – complete and undamaged.

Required Equipment

1. Instrument (district provides cellos and basses for class use)
2. Black hardback 1" binder.
3. Three Sharpened or Mechanical Pencils with lead at all times
4. Mute
5. Soft cloth to wipe off instrument after each use
6. Shoulder pad/rest (violin/viola)
7. Rock Stop (cello/bass)
8. Rosin
9. Tuner

Uniforms

The school district provides each student with the following:

McMillan Junior High School

Black Polo with the Orchestra Logo
(included with the \$30 orchestra fee)

You are responsible for the following items:

Black dress pants
Black belt
Black closed toe dress shoes
Long black dress socks

Wylie High School

<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>
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Tuxedo Jacket	Dress
Tuxedo Pants	

You are responsible for the following items:

Males:

Black long sleeved dress shirt
Black dress shoes
Long black dress socks

Females:

Black closed toe dress shoes
Appropriate hose

Privately Owned Instruments

The quality of literature and the performance standards held by the *Wylie Orchestra* demand 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 gain value as they age. Instruments of this quality must be chosen carefully. Please ask the staff to assist you in this decision.

Lockers

Instrument lockers and locks are available for instrument storage to violin and viola students. Locks are available upon request. Students wishing to use a lock must use one provided by the school. Cello and bass students may use leftover lockers (as available) for storage of supplies and music. Students are responsible for their own property and for remembering their lock combination.

CONCLUSION

Your decision to participate in the *Wylie Orchestra Program* represents the opening of a door to tremendous opportunity. You are very fortunate to live in a place that has a tradition of excellent orchestras and a school administration that values and supports this type of study. Please recognize the value of this opportunity and make the most of it.

This handbook is a guideline 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. All of the rules are meant to serve one purpose: to promote the learning of the orchestra members. Like any good set of guidelines, it is constantly being changed and improved as changing conditions warrant. If you have any questions about the policies in this handbook, please do not hesitate to discuss it with your directors.

Good luck in your studies and prepare yourself for some wonderful music making experiences this year!

Appendix

Orchestra Letterman Points

700 Performance points and 100 Service points are required to earn a jacket.

All members of the Wylie orchestra will have the opportunity to "letter" in orchestra each year that they participate in the program. A High School student may only receive one jacket during their High School career; however, those who meet the requirements and already have a jacket will receive an orchestra letter or bars indicating the number of years they have "lettered" in orchestra.

All points will be logged in Charms. It is the student's responsibility to make sure points are logged correctly. Any instance of dishonesty with points will result in loss of all points accrued. Students will earn points for service and leadership by attending an event for the entire time needed and by working diligently. Simply showing up and not helping or fulfilling a duty or leaving before dismissal will result in zero points earned.

Performance - 700 points required to letter

1. All-Region/All-State Auditions:
 - a. Must be approved and complete the audition - 100 points
 - b. All-Region Orchestra Performer: must rehearse and perform at the concert - 300 points
 - c. Pre-Area/Area Audition: must record audition for All-State orchestra - 300 points
 - d. All-State Orchestra: must attend rehearsals and perform in concert - 700 points
2. Participate in Wylie ISD Solo & Ensemble Contest:
 - a. One solo and/or one ensemble and be approved to participate - 50 points per event
 - b. Superior Rating - 100 points per event
 - c. Excellent Rating - 50 points per event
3. UIL Concert and Sightreading Evaluation -
 - a. Must be approved and perform at UIL - 250 points
4. Participate in private lessons for an entire school year:
 - a. Must be with an approved teacher who confirms enrollment - 200 points

Service - 100 Points required to Letter

1. Community
 - a. Civic/Youth/Church Orchestra: Active participant in a community, church or youth orchestra and provides a letter from the director regarding participation. Students must play their orchestra instrument in the group - 50 points
 - b. Professional/Collegiate Performance Attendance: Student attends a performance of artistic value outside WHS. Student must provide proof with documentation such as a program or ticket stub - 25 points per event
2. Service/Leadership
 - a. Serve as an orchestra officer for one year - 50 points
 - b. Concert Logistics for McMillan/Davis Concert
 - i. Help with concert logistics at a feeder orchestra concert - 25 points per event
 - c. Orchestra Social Event
 - i. Attend an orchestra social event - 20 points per event
 - d. Community Service
 - i. Students must provide a letter from the coordinator of a community service project to help those less fortunate in the community and/or for community improvement. Letter must include the number of hours of work - 10 points per hour/100 points max