

Vandevert MS Orchestra Elective Instrument Selection, Sizing, and Rental Information

Greetings potential orchestra family,

Your student has the opportunity to join the Vandevert Orchestra next year! I put together this step-by-step guide for joining the orchestra, selecting an instrument, sizing guide, and renting to assist you in the process. [Rental guidance starts at step #5.](#)

Steps to take if you want to join the Vandevert Orchestra:

1. Select Orchestra as your #1 Elective Choice on your Course Card that is turned in to the school/counselors. 6th Graders only get one elective, so make sure you put #1!
 - If you selected another elective and want to be in the orchestra, please contact a school counselor to change your elective choice.
2. Watch the instrument videos in the [About Orchestra Slideshow](#) and [Dallas Strings Instrument Demonstration Video](#) to determine which instrument you would like to play. Zero experience is required to join. Orchestra is a year-long commitment.

If your student already plays an orchestra instrument (if not, skip to step number 3), please email Mr. Schmaus at schmausp@friscoisd.org with the following information:

- i. Student legal name and ID#
 - ii. Which instrument they play (violin, viola, cello, bass, or harp)
 - iii. How long they have been playing
 - iv. What music or book they are currently working on
 - You should reference the audition information requirements below and begin working on these with your private teacher to submit over the summer for next year's orchestra placement.
 - [Non-Beginner \(Advanced 6th Grade\) Audition Information](#)
 - i. VMS Orchestra Video Audition Deadline: Friday, June 28th, 2024
3. Attend the Orchestra Instrument Selection and Sizing Event
 - Wednesday, January 10th, 2024 from 4:30-7:00 PM
 - i. Location: Vandevert Cafeteria
 - ii. Music professionals will assist students with selecting an instrument and sizing students for rentals.
 4. If you are unable to attend the Instrument Selection and Sizing Event, please use the [Instrument Sizing Guide](#) to pick which instrument size is right for your student.
 - If your student grows a lot during the spring or over the summer then sometimes sizes need to be exchanged with the rental company. There is no extra charge to change instrument sizes, this is expected as students grow.

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- When you measure, if you are split between two sizes, it is better to pick the smaller size.
- 5. Contact a rental company such as [Dallas Strings](#)
 - Review their webpage and videos regarding rentals.
 - Rent an instrument online or contact the rental company
 - Select Frisco/Vandeventer
 - Select the Instrument/Size
 - Add the following items to your cart
 - i. Beginning Book
 - ii. **Violin/Viola only** - Everest Violin/Viola Shoulder Rest
 - iii. **Cello/Bass only** - Rock Stop or End Pin Anchor
 - iv. Hamilton Deluxe Music Stand and Bag
 - v. Basic Rosin Cloth
 - vi. Standard Cleaning Cloth – Free
 - vii. Add a tuner
 - 1. KORG Pitchclip 2 (cello/bass)
 - 2. NS Micro Violin Tuner D'Addario (violin/viola)
 - viii. Renting an instrument and purchasing the school kit plus tuner takes care of the supplies' needs listed on the first page of our Supply list.
 - Select "Fall School Delivery" at checkout so the orchestra directors may put finger guidance tapes on the instruments, prepare them for instruction, assign lockers, etc. before school starts.
 - i. Please rent now or by the end of May so Dallas Strings has the summer to prepare instruments. Waiting till right before school starts or even as school begins will put your student behind their peers.
 - ii. You will only pay for the months of rental once the instrument has been delivered. Example: If you set up the rental in April, you would not pay April-June. You would begin payments once school starts.
 - iii. If you plan to take private lessons before school starts, you need to select "Pick up at Allen Location" so that you have access to the instrument earlier.
 - Checkout and you're done!
- 6. For more information about the orchestra: <https://www.vandeventerorchestra.com/>

Additional Information

If you are reading this after the annual instrument selection night and were unable to attend, please email Mr. Schmaus which instrument you chose for scheduling purposes.

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Financial Transparency and Expectations: Orchestra is both a financial and time commitment by students and parents. I am outlining these for your understanding so you may discuss with your students the responsibility associated with choosing the orchestra elective for the entire year.

1. Initial supplies purchase/one-time startup cost
 - a. \$50.00-\$100.00
2. Monthly Rental
 - a. Varies depending on the instrument, please reference the [Dallas Strings Flyer](#)
3. Cello, Bass, and Harp Only - Fisd School Instrument Usage Fee
 - a. \$50.00 per semester
 - b. More information is on page 2 of the [VMS Orchestra Handbook](#).
4. Private Music Instruction (optional, but highly encouraged)
 - a. More information is on page 5 of the [VMS Orchestra Handbook](#).
 - b. \$23-60 weekly depending on the teacher and length of private instruction
5. Orchestra Annual Dues
 - a. \$100-110.00 per year
 - b. More information is on page 8 of the [VMS Orchestra Handbook](#).

Daily Practice Standards:

- Practice 6 days a week, with one day off
- Beginners practice a minimum of 30-45 minutes a day. At the beginning of the year, beginner students should be playing for 15 minutes with a small break and another 15 minutes as their muscles adjust to a new activity.
- Intermediate players practice a minimum of 45-60 minutes a day
- Advanced players practice 60+ minutes of daily practice

Our top award-winning violinist last year practiced 2 hours a day. Not to say that everyone needs to practice this much, but to be highly skilled at any activity, it takes a lot of dedication!

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Orchestra Grades:

To align with the mastery-based grading standards and with best teaching practices, we will be assessing students playing daily with a formal playing test, on average, once a week.

For students to be successful on their weekly assessments, the practice standards listed above need to be followed. Parents, please be involved in structuring and enforcing your student's practice time and commitment. In the past, I have heard parents say that they do not make their students practice because they want them to be self-motivated. The majority of 10-13-year-olds do not have the maturity to self-regulate motivation and need assistance with building responsible and regular practice habits. We are relying on you to be our orchestra partners at home to help your student be successful!

We look forward to having new musicians in our program next year!

Mr. Schmaus

schmausp@friscoisd.org